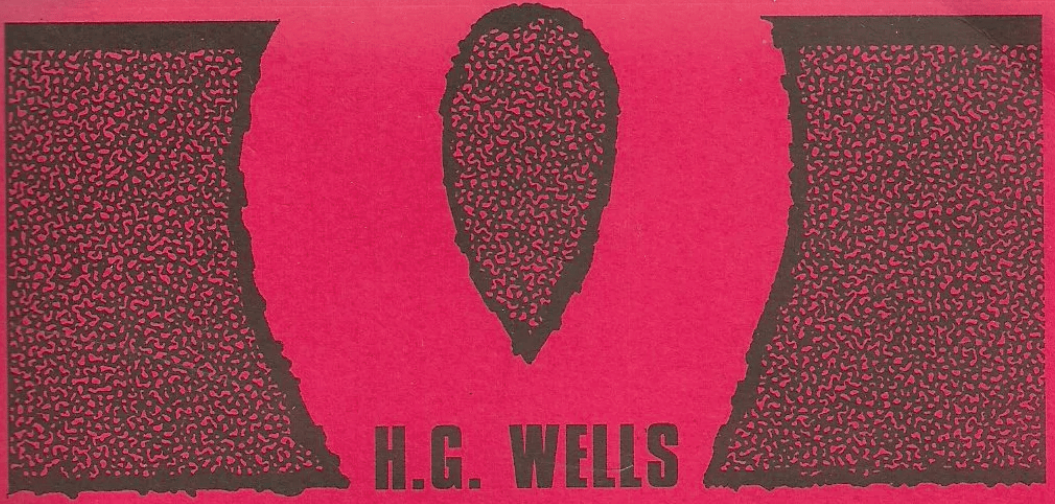

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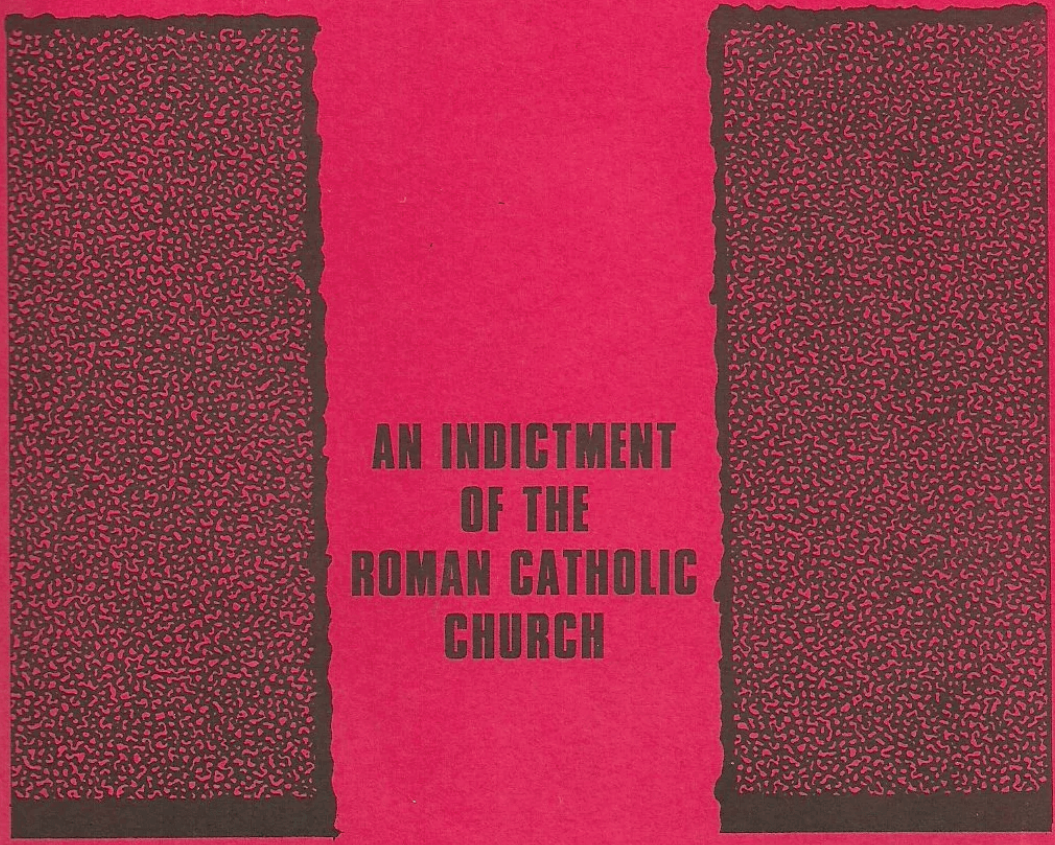

AN INDICTMENT
OF THE
ROMAN CATHOLIC
CHURCH

BERSERKER
BOOKS

CRUX ANSATA

AN INDICTMENT OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

BY

H. G. WELLS

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I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA OF CHRISTENDOM

LET US TELL as compactly as possible certain salient phases in the history of the Christian organisation that led up to the breach between the various forms of Protestantism and Rome. Like all human organisations that have played a part through many generations, the career of the Catholic Church has passed through great fluctuations. It had phases of vigorous belief in itself and wise leadership; it fell into evil ways and seemed no better than a dying carcass; it revived, it split. There is no need for us to explore the early development and variations of Christianity before it assumed its definite form under the patronage and very definite urgency of the Emperor Constantine. The recriminations of the early Fathers, their strange ideas and stranger practices need not concern us here. There were churches, but there was no single unified Church.

Catholicism as we know it as a definite and formulated belief came into existence with the formulation of the Nicene Creed. Eusebius gives a curious account of that strange assemblage at Nicæa, over which the Emperor, although he was not yet a baptised Christian, presided. It was not his first council of the Church, for he had al-

ready (in 314) presided over a council at Arles. He sat in the middle of the Council of Nicæa upon a golden throne, and, as he had little Greek, we must suppose he was reduced to watching the countenances and gestures of the debaters, and listening to their intonations.

The council was a stormy one. When old Arius rose to speak, one, Nicholas of Myra, struck him in the face, and afterwards many ran out, thrusting their fingers into their ears in affected horror at the old man's heresies. One is tempted to imagine the great Emperor, deeply anxious for the solidarity of his empire, firmly resolved to end these divisions, bending towards his interpreters to ask them the meaning of the uproar.

The views that prevailed at Nicæa are embodied in the Nicene Creed, a strictly Trinitarian statement, and the Emperor sustained the Trinitarian position. But afterwards, when Athanasius bore too hardly upon the Arians, he had him banished from Alexandria; and when the Church at Alexandria would have excommunicated Arius, he obliged it to readmit him to communion.

A very important thing for us to note is the rôle played by this Emperor in the unification and fixation of Christendom. Not only was the Council of Nicæa assembled by Constantine the Great, but all the great councils, the two at Constantinople (381 and 553), Ephesus (431), and Chalcedon (451), were called together by the imperial power. And it is very manifest that in much of the history of Christianity at this time the spirit of Constantine the Great is as evident as, or more evident than, the spirit of Jesus.

Constantine was a pure autocrat. Autocracy had

ousted the last traces of constitutional government in the days of Aurelian and Diocletian. To the best of his lights the Emperor was trying to reconstruct the tottering empire while there was yet time, and he worked, according to those lights, without any councillors, any public opinion, or any sense of the need of such aids and checks.

The idea of stamping out all controversy and division, stamping out all independent thought, by imposing one dogmatic creed upon all believers, is an altogether autocratic idea, it is the idea of the single-handed man who feels that to get anything done at all he must be free from opposition and criticism. The story of the Church after he had consolidated it becomes, therefore, a history of the violent struggles that were bound to follow upon his sudden and rough summons to unanimity. From him the Church acquired that disposition to be authoritative and unquestioned, to develop a centralised organisation and run parallel with the Roman Empire which still haunts its mentality.

A second great autocrat who presently emphasised the distinctly authoritarian character of Catholic Christianity was Theodosius I, Theodosius the Great (379-395). He handed over all the churches to the Trinitarians, forbade the unorthodox to hold meetings, and overthrew the heathen temples throughout the empire, and in 390 he caused the great statue of Serapis at Alexandria to be destroyed. Henceforth there was to be no rivalry, no qualification to the rigid unity of the Church.

Here we need tell only in the broadest outline of the vast internal troubles of the Church, its indigestions of

heresy; of Arians and Paulicians, of Gnostics and Manichæans.

The denunciation of heresy came before the creeds in the formative phase of Christianity. The Christian congregations had interests in common in those days; they had a sort of freemasonry of common interests, their general theology was Pauline, but they evidently discussed their fundamental doctrines and documents widely and sometimes acrimoniously. Christian teaching almost from the outset was a matter for vehement disputation. The very Gospels are rife with unsettled arguments; the Epistles are disputations, and the search for truth intensified divergence. The violence and intolerance of the Nicene Council witness to the doctrinal stresses that had already accumulated in the earlier years, and to the perplexity confronting the statesmen who wished to pin these warring theologians down to some dominating statement in the face of this theological Babel.

It is impossible for an intelligent modern student of history not to sympathise with the underlying idea of the papal court, with the idea of one universal rule of righteousness keeping the peace of the earth, and not to recognise the many elements of nobility that entered into the Lateran policy. Sooner or later mankind must come to one universal peace, unless our race is to be destroyed by the increasing power of its own destructive inventions; and that universal peace must needs take the form of a government, that is to say, a law-sustaining organisation, in the best sense of the word religious—a government ruling men through the edu-

cated co-ordination of their minds in a common conception of human history and human destiny.

The Catholic Church was the first clearly conscious attempt to provide such a government in the world. We cannot too earnestly examine its deficiencies and inadequacies, for every lesson we can draw from them is necessarily of the greatest value in forming our ideas of our own international relationships.

II

THE ESSENTIAL WEAKNESS OF CHRISTENDOM

AND FIRST AMONG the things that confront the student is the intermittence of the efforts of the Church to establish the world-City of God. The policy of the Church was not whole-heartedly and continuously set upon that end. Only now and then some fine personality or some group of fine personalities dominated it in that direction. "The fatherhood of God" that Jesus of Nazareth preached was overlaid almost from the beginning by the doctrines and ceremonial traditions of an earlier age, and of an intellectually inferior type. Christianity early ceased to be purely prophetic and creative. It entangled itself with archaic traditions of human sacrifice, with Mithraic blood-cleansing, with priestcraft as ancient as human society, and with elaborate doctrines about the structure of the divinity. The gory entrail-searching forefinger of the Etruscan *pontifex maximus* presently overshadowed the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth; the mental complexity of the Alexandrian Greek entangled them. In the jangle of these incompatibles the Church, trying desperately to get on with its unifying task, became dogmatic and resorted to arbitrary authority.

Its priests and bishops were more and more men

moulded to creeds and dogmas and set procedures; by the time they became popes they were usually oldish men, habituated to a politic struggle for immediate ends and no longer capable of worldwide views. They had forgotten about the Fatherhood of God; they wanted to see the power of the Church, which was their own power, dominating men's lives. It was just because many of them probably doubted secretly of the entire soundness of their vast and elaborate doctrinal fabric that they would brook no discussion of it. They were intolerant of doubts and questions, not because they were sure of their faith, but because they were not. The unsatisfied hunger of intelligent men for essential truth seemed to promise nothing but perpetual divergence.

As the solidarity and dogmatism of the Church hardened, it sloughed off and persecuted heretical bodies and individuals with increasing energy. The credulous, naïve and worthy Abbot Guibert of Nogent-sous-Coucy, in his priceless autobiography, gives us the state of affairs in the eleventh century, and reveals how varied and abundant were both the internal and external revolts against the hardening authoritarianism that Hildebrand had implemented.

Abbot Guibert himself is an incipient internal rebel with criticisms of episcopal and papal corruption that already anticipate the Lollards and Luther, and the stories he tells of devils, diabolical possession and infidel death-beds, witness to the wide prevalence of scoffing in Christendom even at that early time.

Yet Abbot Guibert, albeit a potential Protestant, was as completely tied to the Catholic Church as we are all

tied by gravitation to the earth. There was as yet no means of breaking away. The formulæ of separation had still to be discovered. Scoffers might scoff, but they came to heel on the death-bed. Four long centuries of mental travail had to intervene before these ties were broken.

But by the thirteenth century the Church had become morbidly anxious about the gnawing doubts that might presently lay the whole structure of its pretensions in ruins. It was hunting everywhere for heretics, as timid old ladies are said to look under beds and in cupboards before retiring for the night.

III

HERESIES ARE EXPERIMENTS IN MAN'S UNSATISFIED SEARCH FOR TRUTH

LET US EXAMINE some of the broad problems that were producing heresies. Chief of the heretical stems was the Manichæan way of thinking about the conflicts of life.

The Persian teacher Mani was crucified and flayed in the year 277. His way of representing the struggle between good and evil was as a struggle between a power of light and a power of darkness inherent in the universe. All these profound mysteries are necessarily represented by symbols and poetic expressions, and the ideas of Mani still find a response in many intellectual temperaments to-day. One may hear Manichæan doctrines from many Christian pulpits. But the orthodox Catholic symbol was a different one.

Manichæan ideas spread very widely in Europe, and particularly in Bulgaria and the south of France. In the south of France the people who held them were called the Cathars. They arose in Eastern Europe in the ninth century among the Bulgarians and spread westward. The Bulgarians had recently become Christian and were affected by dualistic eastern thought. They insisted upon an excessive sexlessness. They would eat no food that was sex-begotten—eggs, cheese even, were taboo but

they ate fish because they shared the common belief of the time that fish spawned sexlessly. Their ideas jarred so little with the essentials of Christianity, that they believed themselves to be devout Christians. As a body they lived lives of ostentatious purity in a violent, undisciplined and vicious age. They were protected by Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand), because their views enforced his imposition of celibacy upon the clergy (of which we shall tell in Chapter V) in the eleventh century. But later their experiments in the search for truth carried them into open conflict with the consolidating Church. They resorted to the Bible against the priests. They questioned the doctrinal soundness of Rome and the orthodox interpretation of the Bible. They thought Jesus was a rebel against the cruelty of the God of the Old Testament, and not His harmonious Son, and ultimately they suffered for these divergent experiments.

Closely associated with the Cathars in the history of heresy are the Waldenses, the followers of a man called Waldo, who seems to have been comparatively orthodox in his theology, and less insistent on the "pure" life, but offensive to the solidarity of the Church because he denounced the riches and luxury of the higher clergy. Waldo was a rich man who sold all his possessions in order to preach and teach in poverty. He attracted devoted followers and for a time he was tolerated by the Church. But his followers, and particularly those in Lombardy, went further. Waldo had translated the New Testament, including the Revelation, into Provençal, and presently his disciples were denouncing the Roman Church as the Scarlet Woman of the Apocalypse. This

was enough for the Lateran, and presently we have the spectacle of Innocent III, after attempts at argument and persuasion, losing his temper and preaching a Crusade against these troublesome enquirers. The story of that crusade is a chapter in history that the Roman Catholic historians have done their best to obliterate.

Every wandering scoundrel at loose ends was enrolled to carry fire and sword and rape and every conceivable outrage among the most peaceful subjects of the King of France. The accounts of the cruelties and abominations of this crusade are far more terrible to read than any account of Christian martyrdoms by the pagans, and they have the added horror of being indisputably true.

Yet they did not extirpate the Waldenses. In remote valleys of Savoy a remnant survived and lived on, generation after generation, until it was incorporated with the general movement of the Reformation and faced and suffered before the reinvigorated Roman Catholic Church in the full drive of the Counter Reformation. Of that we shall tell later.

The intolerance of the narrowing and concentrating Church was not confined to religious matters. The shrewd, pompous, irascible, disillusioned and rather malignant old men who manifestly constituted the prevailing majority in the councils of the Church, resented any knowledge but their own knowledge, and distrusted any thought that they did not correct and control. Any mental activity but their own struck them as being at least insolent if not positively wicked. Later on they were to have a great struggle upon the question of the

earth's position in space, and whether it moved round the sun or not. This was really not the business of the Church at all. She might very well have left to reason the things that are reason's, but she seems to have been impelled by an inner necessity to estrange the intellectual conscience in men.

Had this intolerance sprung from a real intensity of conviction it would have been bad enough, but it was accompanied by an undisguised contempt for the mental dignity of the common man that makes it far less acceptable to our modern ideas. Quite apart from the troubles in Rome itself there was already manifest in the twelfth century a strong feeling that all was not well with the spiritual atmosphere. There began movements—movements that nowadays we should call "revivalist"—within the Church, that implied rather than uttered a criticism of the sufficiency of her existing methods and organisation. Men sought fresh forms of righteous living outside the monasteries and priesthood.

One outstanding figure is that of St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226). This pleasant young gentleman had a sudden conversion in the midst of a life of pleasure, and, taking a vow of extreme poverty, gave himself up to an imitation of the life of Christ, and to the service of the sick and wretched, and more particularly to the service of the lepers who then abounded in Italy.

He was joined by numbers of disciples, and so the first Friars of the Franciscan Order came into existence. An order of women devotees was set up beside the original confraternity, and in addition great numbers of men and women were brought into less formal association.

He preached, unmolested by the Moslems be it noted, in Egypt and Palestine, though the Fifth Crusade was then in progress. His relations with the Church are still a matter for discussion. His work had been sanctioned by Pope Innocent III, but while he was in the East there was a reconstitution of his order, intensifying discipline and substituting authority for responsive impulse, and as a consequence of these changes he resigned its headship. To the end he clung passionately to the ideal of poverty, but he was hardly dead before the order was holding property through trustees and building a great church and monastery to his memory at Assisi. The disciplines of the order that were applied after his death to his immediate associates are scarcely to be distinguished from a persecution; several of the more conspicuous zealots for simplicity were scourged, others were imprisoned, one was killed while attempting to escape, and Brother Bernard, the "first disciple," passed a year in the woods and hills, hunted like a wild beast.

This struggle within the Franciscan Order is interesting, because it foreshadowed the great troubles that were coming to Christendom. All through the thirteenth century a section of the Franciscans were straining at the rule of the Church, and in 1318 four of them were burnt alive at Marseilles as incorrigible heretics. There seems to have been little difference between the teaching and the spirit of St. Francis and that of Waldo in the twelfth century, the founder of the massacred but unconquerable sect of Waldenses. Both were passionately enthusiastic for the spirit of Jesus of Nazareth. But while Waldo rebelled against the Church, St. Francis

did his best to be a good child of the Church, and his comment on the spirit of official Christianity was only implicit. But both were instances of an outbreak of conscience against authority and the ordinary procedure of the Church. And it is plain that in the second instance, as in the first, the Church scented rebellion.

A very different character to St. Francis was the Spaniard St. Dominic (1170-1221), who was, above all things, orthodox. For him the Church was not orthodox enough. He was a reformer on the Right Wing. He had a passion for the argumentative conversion of heretics, and he was commissioned by Pope Innocent III to go and preach to the Albigenses. His work went on side by side with the fighting and massacres of the crusade. Whom Dominic could not convert, Innocent's crusaders slew.' Yet his very activities and the recognition and encouragement of his order by the Pope witness to the rising tide of discussion, and to the persuasion even of the Papacy that force was no remedy.

In several respects the development of the Black Friars or Dominicans—the Franciscans were the Grey Friars—shows the Roman Church at the parting of the ways, committing itself more and more deeply to a hopeless conflict with the quickening intelligence and courage of mankind. She whose duty it was to teach, chose to compel. The last discourse of St. Dominic to the heretics he had sought to convert is preserved to us. It betrays the fatal exasperation of a man who has lost his faith in the power of truth because *his* truth has not prevailed.

"For many years," he said, "I have exhorted you in

vain, with gentleness, preaching, praying and weeping. But according to the proverb of my country, 'Where blessing can accomplish nothing, blows may avail,' we shall rouse against you princes and prelates, who, alas! will arm nations and kingdoms against this land, . . . and thus blows will avail where blessings and gentleness have been powerless." [1]

[1] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, art. "Dominic."

IV

THE CITY OF GOD

So THE INTOLERANCE of the Catholic Church drove steadily towards its own disruption. Nevertheless for nearly a thousand years the idea of Christendom sustained a conception of human unity more intimate and far wider than was ever achieved before.

As early as the fifth century Christianity had already become greater, sturdier and more enduring than any empire had ever been, because it was something not merely imposed upon men, but interwoven with their deeper instinct for righteousness. It reached out far beyond the utmost limits of the empire, into Armenia, Persia, Abyssinia, Ireland, Germany, India and Turkestan. It had become something no statesman could ignore.

This widespread freemasonry, which was particularly strong in the towns and seaports of the collapsing Empire, must have had a very strong appeal to every political organiser. The Christians were essentially townsmen and traders. The countrymen were still pagans (*pagani* = villagers).

"Though made up of widely scattered congregations," says the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in its article on "Church History," "it was thought of as one body

of Christ, one people of God. This ideal unity found expression in many ways. Intercommunication between the various Christian communities was very active. Christians upon a journey were always sure of a warm welcome from their fellow disciples. Messengers and letters were sent freely from one Church to another. Missionaries and evangelists went continually from place to place. Documents of various kinds, including gospels and apostolic epistles, circulated widely. Thus in various ways the feeling of unity found expression, and the development of widely separated parts of Christendom conformed more or less closely to a common type."

Ideas of worldly rule by this spreading and ramifying Church were indeed already prevalent in the fourth century. Christianity was becoming political. Saint Augustine, a native of Hippo in North Africa, who wrote between 354 and 430, gave expression to the political idea of the Church in his book, *The City of God*. *The City of God* leads the mind very directly towards the possibility of making the world into a theological and organised Kingdom of Heaven. The city, as Augustine puts it, is "a spiritual society of the predestined faithful," but the step from that to a political application was not a very wide one. The Church was to be the ruler of the world over all nations, the divinely-led ruling power over a great league of terrestrial states.

Subsequently these ideas developed into a definite political theory and policy. As the barbarian races settled and became Christian, the Pope began to claim an overlordship of their Kings. In a few centuries the Pope

had become in Latin Catholic theory, and to a certain extent in practice, the high priest, censor, judge and divine monarch of Christendom; his influence, as we have noted, extended far beyond the utmost range of the old empire. For more than a thousand years this idea of the unity of Christendom, of Christendom as a sort of vast amphictyony, whose members even in wartime were restrained from many extremities by the idea of a common brotherhood and a common loyalty to the Church, dominated Europe. The history of Europe from the fifth century onward to the fifteenth is very largely the history of the failure of this great idea of a divinely ordained and righteous world government to realise itself in practice.

V

THE CHURCH SALVAGES LEARNING

IN THE DARK DISORDERS of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, the newly organised Catholic Church played an important rôle in the preservation of learning and social ideas. St. Benedict and Cassiodorus in particular set themselves to the salvage of books and teaching, and among their immediate followers was one of the first great Popes, Gregory the Great. In those days the local Christian priest was often too ignorant to understand the Latin phrases he mumbled and muttered at his services. Gregory's educational energy corrected that. He restored the priests' Latin. So that later the Catholic Church retained its widespread solidarity in spite of the most extraordinary happenings in Rome. It would no doubt have preferred to keep its Latin language without the Latin classics, but their use was unavoidable if the language was to be steadied and sustained.

St. Benedict was born at Spoleto in Italy, a young man of good family. The shadow of the times fell upon him, he conceived a disgust for the evil in life, and, like Buddha a thousand years before him, he took to the religious life and set no limit to his austerities. Fifty miles from Rome is Subiaco, and there at the end of a gorge

of the Anio, beneath a jungle growth of weeds and bushes, rose a deserted palace built by the Emperor Nero, overlooking an artificial lake that had been made in those days of departed prosperity by damming back the waters of the river. Here, with a hair shirt as his chief possession, Benedict took up his quarters in a cave in the high southward-looking cliff that overhangs the stream, in so inaccessible a position that his food had to be lowered to him on a cord by a faithful admirer. Three years he lived here, and his fame spread as Buddha's did, as a great saint and teacher.

Presently we find him no longer engaged in self-torment, but controlling a group of twelve monasteries, the resort of a great number of people. Youths are brought to him to be educated, and the whole character of his life has ceased to be ascetic.

From Subiaco he removed to Monte Cassino, halfway between Rome and Naples, a lonely and beautiful mountain in the midst of a great circle of majestic heights. Here, it is interesting to note that in the sixth century A.D. he found a temple of Apollo and a sacred grove, and the countryside still worshipping at this shrine. His first labours had to be missionary labours, and with difficulty he persuaded the simple pagans to demolish their temple and cut down their grove. The establishment upon Monte Cassino became a famous and powerful centre within the lifetime of its founder. Mixed up with the imbecile inventions of marvel-loving monks about demons exorcised, disciples walking on the water, and dead children restored to life, we can still detect something of the real spirit of Benedict. Particu-

larly significant are the stories that represent him as discouraging extreme mortification. He sent a damping message to a solitary who had invented a new degree in saintliness by chaining himself to a rock in a narrow cave. "Break thy chain," said Benedict, "for the true servant of God is chained not to rocks by iron, but to righteousness by Christ."

Next to the discouragement of solitary self-torture, Benedict insisted upon hard work. Through the legends shine the clear indications of the trouble made by his patrician students and disciples who found themselves obliged to toil instead of leading lives of leisurely austerity under the ministrations of the lower-class brethren.

A third remarkable thing about Benedict was his political influence. He set himself to reconcile Goths and Italians, and it is clear that Totila, his Gothic king, came to him for counsel and was greatly influenced by him. When Totila retook Naples from the Greeks, the Goths protected the women from insult and treated even the captured soldiers with humanity. Belisarius, Justinian's general, had taken the same place ten years previously, and had celebrated his triumph by a general massacre.

Now the monastic organisation of Benedict was a very great beginning in the Western world. One of his prominent followers was Pope Gregory the Great (540-604), the first monk to become Pope (590); he was one of the most capable and energetic of the Popes, sending successful missions to the unconverted, and particularly to the Anglo-Saxons. He ruled in Rome

like an independent king, organising armies, making treaties. To his influence is due the imposition of the Benedictine rule upon nearly the whole of Latin monasticism.

Gregory the Great ruled in Rome like an independent king, organising armies, making treaties. It was he who saw two fair captives from Britain, and, having asked whence they came and being told they were Angles, said they might be angels—*non Angli sed Angeli*—rather than Angles if they had the Faith. He made it his special business to send missionaries to England. This is a high water mark in the chequered history of the Roman Church. From Gregory I it passes into a phase of decadence not only at Rome but throughout its entire sphere of influence.

VI

CHARLEMAGNE

AN INTERESTING AMATEUR in theology who was destined to drive a wedge into the solidarity of the Christian system was the Emperor Charlemagne, Charles the Great, the friend and ally of King Alfred of Wessex. The wedge was unpremeditated. The learned, investing history with the undeserved dignity their scholarly minds craved, have endowed Charles with an almost inhuman foresight. He was the son of Pepin, who had been Mayor of the Palace to the last of the Merovingian Kings, and, on the strength of his being *de facto* King, he appealed to the Pope to transfer the Crown to his head. This the Pope did. Everywhere in Europe the ascendant rulers seized upon Christianity as a unifying force to cement their conquests. Christianity became a banner for aggressive chiefs—as it did in Uganda in Africa in the bloody days before that country was annexed to the British Empire.

Charlemagne was most simply and enthusiastically Christian, and his disposition to sins of the flesh, to a certain domestic laxity—he is accused among other things of incestuous relations with his daughters—merely sharpened his redeeming zeal for the Church. An aggressive Church had long since decided that sins

of the flesh are venial sins when weighed against unorthodoxy, and he was able to offer up vast hecatombs of conquered pagans to appease the more and more complaisant Catholic Church. He insisted on their becoming Christians, and to refuse baptism or to retract after baptism were equally crimes punishable by death. After he was crowned Emperor he obliged every male subject over the age of twelve to renew his oath of allegiance and undertake to be not simply a good subject but a good Christian.

A new Pope, Leo III, in 795, made Charlemagne Emperor. Hitherto the court at Byzantium had possessed a certain indefinite authority over the Pope. Strong emperors like Justinian had bullied the Popes and obliged them to visit Constantinople; weak emperors had annoyed them ineffectively. The idea of a breach, both secular and religious, with Constantinople had long been entertained at the Lateran, and in the Frankish power there seemed to be just the support that was necessary if Constantinople was to be defied.

So upon his accession Leo III sent the keys of the tomb of St. Peter and a banner to Charlemagne as the symbols of his sovereignty in Rome as King of Italy. Very soon the Pope had to appeal to the protection he had chosen. He was unpopular in Rome; he was attacked and ill-treated in the streets during a procession, and obliged to fly to Germany (799). Eginhard says his eyes were gouged out and his tongue cut off. He seems, however, to have had both eyes and tongue again a year later. Charlemagne brought him back to Rome and reinstated him (800).

Then occurred a very important scene. On Christmas Day in the year 800, as Charles was rising from prayer in the Church of St. Peter, the Pope, who had everything in readiness, clapped a crown upon his head and hailed him Cæsar and Augustus. There was great popular applause. But Eginhard, the friend and biographer of Charlemagne, says that the new Emperor was by no means pleased by this coup of Pope Leo's. If he had known this was to happen, he said, "he would not have entered the Church, great festival though it was."

No doubt he had been thinking and talking of making himself Emperor, but he had evidently not intended that the Pope should make him Emperor. He had had some idea of marrying the Empress Irene, who at that time reigned in Constantinople, and so becoming monarch of both Eastern and Western Empires. But now he was obliged to accept the title in the manner that Leo had adopted, as a gift from the Pope, and in a way that estranged Constantinople and secured the separation of Rome from the Byzantine Church.

At first Byzantium was unwilling to recognise the imperial title of Charlemagne. But in 811 a great disaster fell upon the Byzantine Empire. The pagan Bulgarians, under their prince Krum, defeated and destroyed the armies of the Emperor Nicephorus, whose skull became a drinking cup for Krum. The great part of the Balkan peninsula was conquered by these people. After this misfortune Byzantium was in no position to dispute this revival of the empire in the West, and in 812 Charlemagne was formally recognised by Byzantine envoys as Emperor and Augustus.

The defunct Western Empire rose again as the "Holy Roman Empire." While its military strength lay north of the Alps, its centre of authority was Rome. It was from the beginning a divided thing, a claim and an argument rather than a necessary reality. The good German sword was always clattering over the Alps into Italy, and missions and legates toiling over in the reverse direction. But the Germans never could hold Italy permanently, because they could not stand the malaria that the ruined, neglected, undrained country fostered. And in Rome, as well as in several other of the cities of Italy, there smouldered a more ancient tradition, the tradition of the aristocratic republic, hostile to both Emperor and Pope.

In spite of the fact that we have a life of him written by his contemporary, Eginhard, the character and personality of Charlemagne are difficult to visualise. Eginhard was a poor writer; he gives many particulars, but not the particulars that make a living figure. Charlemagne, he says, was a tall man, with a rather feeble voice; and he had bright eyes and a long nose. "The top of his head was round," whatever that may mean, and his hair was "white." Possibly that means he was a blond. He had a thick, rather short neck, and "his belly too prominent." He wore a tunic with a silver border, and gartered hose. He had a blue cloak, and was always girt with his sword, hilt and belt being of gold and silver.

He was a man of great animation and his abundant love affairs did not interfere at all with his incessant military and political labours. He took much exercise,

was fond of pomp and religious ceremonies, and gave generously. He was a man of considerable intellectual enterprise, with a self-confident vanity rather after the fashion of William II, the ex-German Emperor, who recently died so unimpressively at Doorn.

His mental activities are interesting, and they serve as a sample of the intellectuality of the time. Probably he could read; at meals he "listened to music or reading," but he never acquired the art of writing; "he used," says Eginhard, "to keep his writing book and tablets under his pillow, that when he had leisure he might practise his hand in forming letters, but he made little progress in an art begun too late in life." He certainly displayed a hunger for knowledge, and he took pains to attract men of learning to his Court.

These learned men were, of course, clergymen, there being no other learned men then in the world, and naturally they gave a strongly clerical tinge to the information they imparted. At his Court, which was usually at Aix-la-Chapelle or Mayence, he whiled away the winter season by a curious institution called his "school," in which he and his erudite associates affected to lay aside all thoughts of worldly position, assumed names taken from the classical writers or from Holy Writ, and discoursed upon learning and theology. Charlemagne himself was "David." He developed a considerable knowledge of theology, and it is to him that we must ascribe the proposal to add the words *filioque* to the Nicene Creed—an addition that finally split the Latin and Greek Churches asunder. But it is more than doubtful whether he had any such separation in mind. He wanted to add

a word or so to the Creed, just as the Emperor William II wanted to leave his mark on the German language and German books, and he took up this *filioque* idea, which was originally a Spanish innovation. Pope Leo discreetly opposed it. When it was accepted centuries later, it was probably accepted with the deliberate intention of enforcing the widening breach between Latin and Byzantine Christendom.

The *filioque* point is a subtle one, and a word or so of explanation may not seem amiss to those who are uninstructed theologically. Latin Christendom believes now that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father *and the Son;* Greek and Eastern Christians, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, without any mention of the Son. The latter attitude seems to incline a little towards the Arian point of view. The Catholic belief is that the Father and the Son have always existed together, world without end; the Greek orthodox idea is tainted by a very human disposition to think fathers ought to be at least a little senior to their sons. The reader must go to his own religious teachers for precise instruction upon this point.

The disposition of men in positions of supreme educational authority in a community, to direct thought into some particular channel by which their existence may be made the more memorable, is not uncommon. The Emperor William, for instance, helped to make the Germans a people apart, and did much for the spectacle-makers of Germany, by using his influence to sustain the heavy Teutonic black letter and insisting upon the rejection of alien words and roots from the good old

German vocabulary. "Telephone" for instance was anathema, and "fernsprecher" was substituted; and wireless became "drachtlos." So nationalism in Germany achieved the same end as the resistance of English stupidity to orthographic changes, and made the language difficult for and repulsive to foreigners.

The normal speech of Charlemagne was Frankish. He may have understood Latin, more particularly if it was used with consideration, but he could have had no opportunity of Greek. He made a collection of old German songs and tales, but these were destroyed by his son and successor, Louis the Pious, because of their paganism.

VII

BLACK INTERLUDE

FOR A VERY LONG TIME the hold of the Emperors and the Popes upon the City of Rome was a very insecure one.

Many of the surviving patrician families and also the Roman mob claimed the most conflicting privileges in the election and removal of the popes; the German Emperor claimed similar rights, and on the other hand the popes would assert their rights to depose and excommunicate emperors. In this confusion popes multiplied; even a layman, John XIX, was made pope, and there were overlapping popes in considerable abundance. In 1045 there were three popes struggling in Rome, the notoriously vicious Benedict IX, Sylvester III and Gregory VI. Gregory VI bought the Papacy from Benedict, who subsequently went back on his bargain.

Hildebrand became Pope Gregory VII. He succeeded Pope Alexander, who, under his inspiration, had been attempting to reform and consolidate the Church organisation. He imposed celibacy on the clergy and so cut them off from family and social ties. It consolidated the Church but it dehumanised the Church. Hildebrand fought a long fight with the Emperor Henry IV. Henry deposed him and Gregory deposed and excommunicated

the Emperor, who repented and did penance at Canossa. Afterwards Henry regretted his humiliation and created an Anti-Pope, Clement III. He besieged Gregory who held out in the Castle of St. Angelo. Robert Guiscard, a Norman freebooter, whom Pope Nicholas II had made "Duke of Apulia and Calabria and future Lord of Sicily by the Grace of God and St. Peter," came to the rescue, drove out the Emperor and Anti-Pope and incidentally sacked Rome. After which Gregory went off under the protection of the Normans and died at Salerno, a hated and unhappy man, a good and great-spirited man defeated by the uncontrollable complexities of life.

So the story of schisms and conflicts runs on through the records of the Church. Many of the popes fought for power for the vilest ends, but we do such men as Gregory VII and Urban II (the Pope of the First Crusade) the grossest injustice if we ignore the fact that behind this barbaric struggle for power there could be long views and disinterested aims. Conformity to the concepts of Christendom or a merely brutal life impulse were the alternative guides between which men had to choose in the atmosphere of that period. Men "sinned" violently and defiantly and yet were superstitiously afraid. Death-beds generally reeked with penitence, abject confessions and pious bequests. It is difficult for a modern mind to imagine how much in that age of confusion men could believe, and how little dignity, coherence and criticism there was in their beliefs.

How far things could go with the weak, the vicious and the insolent is shown by one phase in the history

of Rome at this time, an almost indescribable phase. The decay of the Empire of Charlemagne had left the Pope unsupported, he was threatened by Byzantium and by the Saracens (who had taken Sicily), and face to face with the unruly nobles of Rome. Among the most powerful of these nobles were two women. Theodora and Marozia, mother and daughter,[1] who in succession held the same Castle of St. Angelo, which Theophylact, the patrician husband of Theodora, had seized together with most of the temporal power of the Pope. These two women were as bold, unscrupulous and dissolute as any male prince of the time could have been, and they are abused by masculine historians as though they were ten times worse. Marozia seized and imprisoned Pope John X (928), who speedily died under her hands. Her mother, Theodora, had beeen his mistress. Marozia subsequently made her illegitimate son Pope, under the title of John XI.

After him her grandson, John XII, filled the chair of St. Peter. Gibbon's account of the manners and morals of John XII is suffused with blushes and takes refuge at last beneath a veil of Latin footnotes. This Pope, John XII, was finally degraded by the German Emperor Otto, scion of a new dynasty that had ousted the Carlovingians, who came over the Alps and down into Italy to be crowned in 962. Harsh critics of the Church call this phase in its history the pornocracy.

The "pornocracy" sounds much more awful for the Catholic Church than was the reality. It has very little controversial weight if our criticism is to be just. It was

[1] Gibbon mentions a second Theodora, the sister of Marozia.

a purely Roman scandal, and the Faithful throughout Christendom probably never heard a word about this "pornocratic" phase. They went about their simple religious duties as they had been taught. It was not an age of easy travel, and practically nobody in the tenth century went to Rome or heard what was happening there. That sort of stress was to come later.

VIII

THE LAUNCHING OF THE CRUSADES BY THE CHURCH

IN THIS BRIEF HISTORY of the complex effort of the human mind and will to secure some mastery over its internal and external perplexities, the Crusades, and particularly the First Crusade, demand our particular attention. The First Crusade displays "Christendom" at its maximum effectiveness as a consolidating and justifying idea, and it shows also how the essential instability of the Roman leadership and the ideological freakishness of Charlemagne combined with the inherent self-seeking and confusion in the human mind at large, to defeat every ostensible purpose of this great eastward drive. Every *ostensible purpose*. But the reaction of the mingling of ideas and purposes that ensued had unforeseen consequences in the disintegration of Christendom that was presently to ensue.

The Crusades were the direct work of the Church. It had been consolidating itself slowly from the uncertainties of the earlier Dark Ages. The establishment of clerical celibacy in the ninth and tenth centuries was isolating it from the social mass, and the retreat from the passionate side of life to monasticism dotted the western world with centres of industrious husbandry,

which availed themselves of the protection of the developing feudal organisation and provided retreats from which men of considerably riper years emerged as ministers, councillors, educators. Becket was about fifty when he was killed, Anselm lived to be seventy-five, Lanfranc's age is uncertain, but it was somewhere about eighty. No wonder they carried weight in a generally puerile world.

A man is as old as his arteries, we say nowadays, but the key to a real and authoritative old age for these divines of the Dark Ages was probably the inherited soundness of their teeth. Those whose teeth decayed ceased to speak with dignity and authority. There was no dentistry except extraction.

"Benefit of clergy," which worked out at last as a convenient mitigation of harsh penal laws, arose out of the claim of the consolidating Church to take clerics out of the hands of the temporal power and deal with them in its own fashion. But the monasteries were only aggressive when they dared; they were not immune from local disorders and had to be steered with discretion. There was incessant bickering, robbery and warfare, and intermittent local famine, and the standard of life rose and fell here and there and from time to time.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the civilisation of Western Europe probably displayed far less social insecurity and inequality, and far less gross brutality, than in the succeeding period. There were regions and phases of comparative health and vitality. But such phases meant the accumulation of lootable resources, and opened the way to conceptions of conquest upon

a larger and more lucrative scale. The Norman Conquest of England was a considerable achievement for that age. The tradition of the Roman Empire, the tradition of great and rich cities to the south-east, still haunted men's imaginations and did much to prepare them for the greater adventure of the Crusades.

The older and wiser heads who were consolidating a renascent Latin Church in the tenth and eleventh centuries were struggling against the incessant bickering warfare of the times. The Church then was something very different from Pope Pacelli's Church of to-day. In its reawakened eleventh-century form, under the direction of that greatest of papal statesmen, Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand), it was the most civilised and civilising thing in the Western world. It was at its best. Not only the Roman Church as we know it, but all the Protestant sects, are derived from it. It had tried various expedients to put a truce upon local violence, and it seized upon the Turkish ill-treatment of pilgrims to the Holy Sepulchre as an incentive. These Turks had smashed the Byzantine armies and driven them out of Asia Minor. They sat down in Nicæa, opposite Byzantium itself. In this extremity Alexis Comnenus, the Byzantine Emperor, appealed to Pope Gregory VII for help, and the Latin-speaking West responded promptly and vigorously. Both the Western Empire and the Church saw plainly before it the subjugation of the Eastern world by the West.

IX

CHRISTENDOM MARCHES EAST

THE INCITEMENT TO CRUSADE aroused a stupendous and varied response. It released all the latent unifying forces that had accumulated about the idea of Christendom. In the beginning of the seventh century we saw Western Europe as a chaos of social and political fragments, with no common idea nor hope, a system shattered almost to a dust of self-seeking individuals. Now, at the close of the eleventh century, we discover a common belief, a linking idea, to which men may devote themselves, and by which they can co-operate together in a universal enterprise. We realise that, in spite of much weakness and intellectual and moral unsoundness, to this extent the Christian Church had *worked*. We are able to measure the evil phases of tenth-century Rome, the scandals, the filthiness, the murders and violence, at their proper value by the scale of this fact. No doubt, not only in Rome itself, but all over Christendom, there had been many lazy, evil and foolish ecclesiastics, but it is manifest that in spite of them a task of teaching and co-ordination had been accomplished by a great multitude of right-living priests and monks and nuns. A new and greater amphictyony, the amphictyony of Christianity,

had come into the world, and it had been built by thousands of these anonymous faithful lives.

And the response to the appeal of Urban II was not confined only to what we should call educated people. It was not simply knights and princes who were willing to go crusading. Side by side with the figure of Urban we must put that of Peter the Hermit, a type novel to Europe, albeit a little reminiscent of the Hebrew prophets. This man appeared preaching the crusade to the common people. He told a story—whether truthful or untruthful hardly matters in this connection—of his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, of the wanton destruction at the Holy Sepulchre by the Seljuk Turks, who took it somewhen about 1075—the chronology of this period is still very vague—and of the exactions, brutalities and deliberate cruelties now practised upon the Christian pilgrims to the Holy Places. Barefooted, clad in a coarse garment, riding on an ass and bearing a huge cross, this man travelled about France and Germany, and everywhere harangued vast crowds in church or street or market-place.

Here for the first time we discover the masses of Europe with a common idea. Here is a collective response of indignation to the story of a remote wrong, a swift realisation of a common cause by rich and poor alike. You cannot imagine that happening in the Empire of Augustus Cæsar, or, indeed, in any previous state in the world's history. Something of the kind might perhaps have been possible in the far smaller world of Hellas, or in Arabia before Islam. But this movement affected

nations, kingdoms, tongues and peoples. We are dealing with something new that has come into the world.

From the first this flaming enthusiasm was mixed with baser elements. There was the cold and calculated scheme of the free and ambitious Latin Church to subdue and replace the Byzantine Church; there was the freebooting instinct of the Normans, now tearing Italy to pieces, which turned readily enough to a new and richer world of plunder; and there was something in the multitude who now turned their faces east, something deeper than love in the human composition, namely, fearborn hate, that the impassioned appeals of the propagandists and the exaggeration of the horrors and cruelties of the infidel had fanned into flame.

And still other forces were at work; the intolerant Seljuks and the intolerant Fatimites lay now an impassable barrier across the eastward trade of Genoa and Venice that had hitherto flowed through Baghdad, Aleppo and Egypt. Unless Constantinople and the Black Sea route were to monopolise Eastern trade altogether, they must force open these closed channels. Moreover, in 1094 and 1095 there had been a pestilence and famine from the Scheldt to Bohemia, and there was great social disorganisation.

"No wonder," wrote Mr. Ernest Barker, "that a stream of emigration set towards the East, such as would in modern times flow towards a newly discovered goldfield—a stream carrying in its turbid waters much refuse, tramps and bankrupts, camp-followers and hucksters, fugitive monks and escaped villeins, and

marked by the same motley grouping, the same fever of life, the same alternations of affluence and beggary, which mark the rush for a goldfield to-day."

But these were secondary contributory causes. The fact of predominant interest to the historian of mankind is this *will to crusade* suddenly revealed as a new mass possibility in human affairs.

The first forces to move eastward were great crowds of undisciplined people rather than armies, and they sought to make their way by the valley of the Danube, and thence southward to Constantinople. This has been called the "people's crusade." Never before in the whole history of the world had there been such a spectacle as these masses of practically leaderless people moved by an idea. It was a very crude idea. When they got among foreigners, they did not realise they were not already among the infidel. Two great mobs, the advance guard of the expedition, committed such excesses in Hungary, where the language was incomprehensible to them, that they were massacred. A third host began with a great pogrom of the Jews in the Rhineland, and this multitude was also destroyed in Hungary. Two other swarms under Peter himself reached Constantinople, to the astonishment and dismay of the Emperor Alexius. They looted and committed outrages, until he shipped them across the Bosphorus, to be massacred rather than defeated by the Seljuks (1096).

This first unhappy appearance of the "people" as people in modern European history was followed in 1097 by the organised forces of the First Crusade. They came by diverse routes from France, Normandy, Flan-

ders, England, Southern Italy and Sicily, and the will and power of them were the Normans. They crossed the Bosphorus and captured Nicæa, which Alexius snatched away from them before they could loot it.

Then they went to Antioch, which they took after nearly a year's siege. Then they defeated a great relieving army from Mosul.

A large part of the crusaders remained in Antioch, a smaller force under Godfrey of Bouillon went on to Jerusalem. To quote Barker again: "After a little more than a month's siege, the city was finally captured (July 15th, 1099). The slaughter was terrible; the blood of the conquered ran down the streets, until men splashed in blood as they rode. At nightfall, 'sobbing for excess of joy,' the crusaders came to the Sepulchre from their treading of the winepress, and put their blood-stained hands together in prayer. So, on that day of triumph, the First Crusade came to an end."

The authority of the Patriarch of Jerusalem was at once seized upon by the Latin clergy with the expedition, and the Orthodox Christians found themselves in rather a worse case under Latin rule than under the Turk. There were already Latin principalities established at Antioch and Edessa, and between these various courts and kings began a struggle for ascendancy. There was an unsuccessful attempt to make Jerusalem a property of the Pope. These are complications beyond our present scope.

Let us quote, however, a characteristic passage from Gibbon, to show the drift of events: "In a style less grave than that of history, I should perhaps compare the

Emperor Alexius to the jackal, who is said to follow the steps and devour the leavings of the lion. Whatever had been his fears and toils in the passage of the First Crusade, they were amply recompensed by the subsequent benefits which he derived from the exploits of the Franks. His dexterity and vigilance secured their first conquest of Nicæa, and from this threatening station the Turks were compelled to evacuate the neighbourhood of Constantinople.

"While the Crusaders, with blind valour, advanced into the midland countries of Asia, the crafty Greek improved the favourable occasion when the emirs of the sea coast were recalled to the standard of the Sultan. The Turks were driven from the islands of Rhodes and Chios; the cities of Ephesus and Smyrna, of Sardes, Philadelphia and Laodicea, were restored to the empire, which Alexius enlarged from the Hellespont to the banks of the Mæander and the rocky shores of Pamphylia. The churches resumed their splendour; the towns were rebuilt and fortified; and the desert country was peopled with colonies of Christians, who were gently removed from the more distant and dangerous frontier.

"In these paternal cares we may forgive Alexius if he forgot the deliverance of the holy sepulchre; but, by the Latins, he was stigmatised with the foul reproach of treason and desertion. They had sworn obedience and fidelity to his throne; but *he* had promised to assist their enterprise in person, or, at least, with his troops and treasures; his base retreat dissolved all their obligations; and the sword, which had been the instrument of their victory, was the pledge and title of their just inde-

pendence. It does not appear that the emperor attempted to revive his obsolete claims over the kingdom of Jerusalem, but the borders of Cilicia and Syria were more recent in his possession and more accessible to his arms. The great army of the crusaders was annihilated or dispersed; the principality of Antioch was left without a head, by the surprise and captivity of Bohemond; his ransom had oppressed him with a heavy debt; and his Norman followers were insufficient to repel the hostilities of the Greeks and Turks.

"In this distress, Bohemond embraced a magnanimous resolution, of leaving the defence of Antioch to his kinsman, the faithful Tancred; of arming the West against the Byzantine Empire, and of executing the design which he inherited from the lessons and example of his father Guiscard. His embarkation was clandestine; and if we may credit a tale of the Princess Anna, he passed the hostile sea closely secreted in a coffin. (Anna Conpena adds that, to complete the imitation, he was shut up with a dead cock; and condescends to wonder how the barbarian could endure the confinement and putrefaction. This absurd tale is unknown to the Latins.) . . ."

So Gibbon, caustic but veracious, detesting Roman and Byzantine with an impartial detestation, bears his witness.

It was in this widening conflict of the Latin and the Greek that the theological freak of Charlemagne, the *filioque* clause, became important politically.

We have traced the growth of this idea of a religious government of Christendom—and through Christendom of mankind—and we have shown how naturally

and how necessarily, because of the tradition of world empire, it found a centre at Rome. The Pope of Rome was the only Western patriarch; he was the religious head of a vast region in which the ruling tongue was Latin; the other patriarchs of the Orthodox Church spoke Greek, and so were inaudible throughout his domains; and the two words *filioque*, which had been added to the Latin creed, now split off the Byzantine Christians by one of those impalpable and elusive doctrinal points upon which there is no reconciliation. (The final rupture was in 1054).

The broad reality of the Crusades was that all the surplus energy of the West, in a passion of greed, piety and virtuous indignation, poured down upon the far more sophisticated Levant and returned with a thousand hitherto unheard-of things. Most of the rank and file were killed off ("The men were splendid"), but the knights and noblemen who returned with their retinues came back with silk and velvet, dyes and chain armour, and cravings and conceptions of luxury that had been submerged in the minds of western men since the collapse of the Roman Empire.

X

A CATHOLIC GENTLEMAN OF 1440

LET US NOW SKETCH the face and quality of human life in Europe at that time, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. We must clear our minds of the popular persuasion that the people who went to and fro in the towns and villages we inherit were very much like the people who walk about our streets to-day, except that they wore different costumes. That is a complete delusion. There was no such fancy dress ball. These fifteenth-century people were, on the average, twenty years younger, they were less healthy looking, and they stank quite abominably. The barbarism of the period was not primitive. It had arisen out of the decadence of a preceding social order. The great public baths of the Roman tradition had faded out of the crumbling social edifice. Not only are we misled by the natural anthropomorphism, so to speak, that makes us image the crowds in the past essentially like the crowds of to-day, but we are also misled by the pictures and records which misrepresent the spectacle of the times.

The printed book had still to dawn upon the world, and whatever record was made of the show of things was kept by monkish chroniclers employed by the Princes and Potentates of the time. These keepers of the

records sat and toiled to make their manuscripts as bright and pleasing to their employers as possible. So that our vision of that time is magically illuminated by their art. A reeking slum of human indignity is lit up by the flattering brightness of the subservient chronicler and the blazons of heraldry, and it is only when we subject them to a closer scrutiny that we are able to grasp the squalid facts of human life during that period.

Then as now the world had its own loveliness, sunrise and sunset, the glorious onset of spring, the golden autumn, the white frost flowers upon the branches, but the dyes and fabrics of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century clothing in Christendom had none of the gilt and shining pigmentation of the illuminator. Clothing must have been still crude in colour and stale and dirty in substance. The normal span of life was brief and men were flimsier. We find the armour of our ancestors too small and tight for even puny men to-day. But then, one may ask, was it worn by real grown-up men? These people were often married at thirteen, they were warriors and leaders in their later teens; they became cruel old satyrs at six-and-thirty. In fact they never grew up either physically or mentally. They lived in a world of witless lordship and puerile melodrama.

From this disillusioning digression upon the brilliance in the fifteenth century, we can turn to one exceptionally "brilliant" young man, Gilles de Rais, a type of his time, of whose life we have by various accidents an exceptionally full record. He was married to a rich heiress at sixteen after two earlier attempts to make a match for him (the earliest at thirteen) had fallen through. He

was a boy not only of exceptional energy but of exceptional gifts. He patronised music. He illuminated and bound books. And from the outset he was what people call "unbalanced."

Some people may be disposed to account for his peculiar aberrations by saying he just "went mad." But madness is as pitiless and consistent a process as anything else that can happen, the sequence of ideas in those we call insane is as inevitable, you can find their origins and their associations, and nowadays when we are all out of harmony with our conditions of survival, to say merely that he "went mad" does not even put him outside the pale of normal experience. Exceptionally wealthy at the outset, his mental liveliness made him a spendthrift. Like many youngsters born rich, he could not imagine being hard up until he was. He liked to give extravagant entertainments, mysteries and moralities. From first to last he was a good Catholic, conscientiously and unfeignedly religious. But for that he might never have been hung. He dabbled in alchemy and the black arts—there was no Monte Carlo for him in those days and no turf—and he tried to make up for his magic by extravagant charity and special masses.

All this is the behaviour of an uncontrolled upper-form schoolboy with a belief in his luck, an uncritical piety of the "Onward Christian Soldiers" type, and an unanalysed disposition to torment fags. It must be cited to place him definitely in relation to our own minds, but not in any way as a condonation of what he did. He was cruel; by all our standards he was hideously cruel; he delighted in the tormenting of children; and the points

best worth discussing about him here are, *first*, whether he was an exceptional sinner, or whether his crimes were the outcome of a mental disposition that has always been operative since that wretched congestion of mankind which is called civilisation began; and *secondly*, and more important for our present purpose, how far the religious beliefs and practices of Catholic Christendom in the fifteenth century really condemned his abominations.

The Christians before the days of Constantine the Great had stood out valiantly against the cruelties of the arena and for the practical brotherhood of man, but was the Church still doing so when Gilles de Rais was a great nobleman? The records tell that he was hung for the torture and murder of 140 children to which he confessed, in the year 1440. He had committed sacrilege and infringed clerical immunity by entering the Church of St. Etienne de Mer Morte just after Mass and dragging out a certain Jean de Ferron who was kneeling there in prayer. This precipitated the hostility and suspicion that was accumulating against him. As a sequel to this outrage he was arrested and cited before the Bishop of Nantes on various charges of which sacrilege and heresy were the chief and these murders a secondary issue. A parallel enquiry was made by Pierre de l'Hôpital, President of the Breton *parlement*, by whose sentence he was finally condemned. His piety and abject confession saved him from torture, of which he probably went in profound dread because of the fascination it had for him.

He was hung, "housell'd, appointed, anel'd," more

fortunate than Hamlet's father, and his body was saved from being burnt by "four or five dames and demoiselles of great estate," who removed his body from the flames of the pyre built so that he would fall into it. Manifestly they thought no great evil of what he had done. His two associates had no such social standing, and their bodies were burnt. This, I understand, will cause them considerable trouble at the Resurrection, from which the aristocratic Gilles will be exempt.

He began life brilliantly and honourably. He must have seemed a splendid young man to the world about him, and by every current standard he was splendid. He was a close ally and supporter of Joan of Arc, with whom he fought side by side at Orleans and later at Jargeau and Patay. He carried out the coronation of Charles VII at Reims, and he was made maréchal of France upon that important occasion.

This riddle of condonation of social inequality and cruelty confronts us at every stage of the long "Martyrdom of Man." Man is evidently an animal which will fight, and on occasion fight desperately, but which prefers to fight at an advantage. He has been readier to use moderation and make concessions when fighting against his quasi-equals than against those who are altogether helpless, and always he has shown little or no regard for his inferiors, the rank and file, still less for the feeble folk who get in his militant way. When a scorched earth policy had to be undertaken, or if they were Jews or infidels, they counted for nothing at all.

The Merchant of Venice, the dullest play perhaps produced by the Shakespeare group, exhibits an internal

struggle between a liberal-minded and a prejudiced element in the group of players which vamped up that fundamentally dreary story of hate against hate. The struggle between these two elements goes on in every human grouping, not only between one man and another, but between what we are apt to call a man's better self and his lower nature, between his sense of righteousness and his even more deeply rooted prejudices. It runs through the entire Christian story, and our case against the Catholic Church is that, albeit it originated in a passionate assertion of the conception of brotherly equality, it relapsed steadily from the broad nobility of its beginnings and passed over at last almost completely to the side of persecution and the pleasures of cruelty.

XI

SOCIAL INEQUALITY IN THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

By the onset of the fifteenth century, the generally youthful population of Christendom had achieved its maximum complex of human inequality, and displayed an intricacy of social stratification that only caste-ridden India could excel. If one turns over the pictures of those admirable compilations, M. A. Racinet's *Le Costume Historique,* or, still better, Adolf Rosenberg's *Geschichte des Kostüms,* one can see the whole process of an incoherent barbarism passing visibly into an intensely sophisticated social structure, with an ever widening gap between class and class, in the course of three centuries. The common people still go half naked, or they wear skins and have rude puttees wrapped about their feet.

So the mass remains, but presently intermediate strata appear. Below the strenuous magnificence of the nobility and gentry appear craftsmen subserving the expanding needs of their superiors. Upper servants appear, and attendants made passable in their appearances and even wearing liveries.

Nobody catered for the ordinary man's clothing. He

wore old cast-off stuff. Even to-day there is still a great market for cast-off clothes. Right down to the middle nineteenth century "Paddy" was wearing inappropriate second-hands. His tail coat and deboshed top-hat was part of the fun the English made of him. Below the level of gentility nobody thought of catering for the lower-class body or the lower-class home. I am now nearly seventy-seven and I was brought up in a home in which everything, carpets, beds and all, except for a muslin curtain or so, had been bought at sales. It was an indignant philanthropist at Plymouth without any thought of gain who resolved to make furniture that would meet the needs of the poor home, lower-middle-class chiefly. He blundered into a fortune and launched Shoolbred's, Maple's, Heal's and all the rest of them on their vast prosperous careers. In the period of Gilles de Rais, no "inferior" dared enjoy anything until it had done its service at the rich man's table. To everyone in the world, this seemed altogether natural. Meanly and dirtily dressed, ill-nourished, ill-housed and despised; that was the lot of the vulgar. Witness our "myriad-minded" Shakespeare. How some one in that "myriad" could despise their "greasy caps" and mock their poor efforts to imitate and propitiate their betters!

Dirt and mutual contempt, smothered resentments and cringing acquiescences. Such was social reality in the fifteenth century, in which Gilles de Rais lived, insanitary finery above brooding over great squalor. Such was the social atmosphere of the supreme disruptive phase in Christendom.

Even when one scrutinises the sort of thing the four-

teenth and fifteenth centuries esteemed finery, there is a cheapness of invention and a factor of animal assertion that jars upon the dignity and reservations of our maturer minds. The cod-piece, often formidably enlarged, witnesses to the sexual obsessions of these adolescent ancestors of ours, and suggests the graffiti of the public urinal which releases the awakening minds of contemporary youth.

Apart from that aspect of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the costume of the middling sort displays a resort to pinking, puffing, slashing, legs of different colours and the like feeble devices.

Somewhen about this time there came a wave of better taste—I think out of Central Asia. It came with playing cards. The pinking and puffing and slashing, the silly long-toed shoes and so forth, presently vanished before its influence—for a time. The court cards of the normal pack foreshadow the dress of the seventeenth century. This wave of better taste did not come with the returning Crusaders, but by some more northern route, about which I am equally curious and ignorant. With its onset a certain sobriety imposed itself upon the costume of the intermediate classes. Their superiors soon returned to the ruffs and bejewelled embroidery. Their inferiors remained squalid. As they are to this day.

XII

THE DAWN OF SOCIAL DISCONTENT

Now IT HAPPENED that two very considerable stresses in the common way of living in Europe occurred in the middle fourteenth century. At first they had little to do with each other or with the religious development of Christendom. Later they were to revolutionise it altogether. They both came from the East. One was the Black Death; the other was the manufacture of paper and the obvious possibility it brought with it of printing uniform books from movable type. The one made labour dear; the other made books and knowledge cheap. The first, as we shall see, launched socialism upon the world; the second liberated the critical intelligence of mankind. Hitherto the subjugation of the common people had been an easy matter. There were plenty of them, and if they would not work for the Lord of the Manor or his sub-tenants, they could freeze and starve. Then came deliverance out of the East and found a ready soil in the filthy towns and dirty villages of the mediæval countryside, the Great Pestilence.

Never was there such a pestilence. It came and it returned. It well-nigh blotted out mankind. More than half of the three or four millions who formed the population of England were swept away. There were no

hands to till the soil; there were none left who could drive the straying cattle out of the fields and corn.

For the first time in the history of Christendom there followed a struggle between property and the worker. Property, in accordance with its age-long established ideology, could find no better way of dealing with the universal distress than to assert that the workers must toil very much harder. The propertied classes of the desolation after the Black Death tried to tie such workers as there were to their jobs, by forbidding migration, fixing wages below starvation level, and so forth, and being very implacable about it all.

The vague indignation of popular common sense found expression in the preaching of one whom the courtly Froissart called "a mad priest of Kent," John Ball.

"Good people," cried the preacher, "things will never go well in England so long as goods be not in common, and so long as there be villeins and gentlemen. By what right are they whom we call lords greater folk than we? On what grounds have they deserved it? Why do they hold us in serfage? If we all came of the same father and mother, of Adam and Eve, how can they say or prove that they are better than we, if it be not that they make us gain for them by our toil that they spend in their pride? They are clothed in velvet and warm in their furs and their ermines, while we are covered with rags. They have wine and spices and fair bread; and we oat-cake and straw, and water to drink. They have leisure and fine houses; we have pain and labour, the rain and

the wind in the fields. And yet it is of us and of our toil that these men hold their state."

And so to the plain challenge of

> *"When Adam delved and Eve span,*
> *Who was then the gentleman?"*

The French Jacquerie was simultaneous and all of a piece with the primordial socialism of John Ball. At that time Kent and the south-east of England were far more closely linked with the north-east of France in thought and social life than with the lands behind either region. There were parallel movements in Flanders, and especially Ghent and Bruges and Ypres. The Ghent weavers were the stoutest. "For six years, despite amazing vicissitudes, they held their own against the prince, the nobles and all 'good folk who had anything to lose'" (Henri Pirenne, *A History of Europe*).

How Wat Tyler was murdered; how later on John Ball was executed in the sight of Richard II; how that tragic and inglorious king lied and cheated his way out of the Peasant Revolt; how the people trusted him and were massacred for their touching disposition to accept the word of a gentleman; and how, after a phase of alleviation, due to the fact that the more they were butchered the rarer they became, they increased and multiplied and were economically debased once more; all that is to be found in any history.

But the spirit of that Kentish revolt did not die; it remained as an insubordination that presently, with the translation and presently the printing and cheapening of

the Bible and the downward extension of literacy that ensued, developed into religious recalcitrance, into nonconformity and dissent, into radicalism and at last into lucid world socialism, against which tradition, the old idea of lord over inferior as the natural structure of society, never completely reinstated itself.

XIII

THE MENTAL ATMOSPHERE BEFORE THE REFORMATION

IT MUST BE UNDERSTOOD that it was from within the body of the Catholic Church that the destruction of its own unity came. It was men in holy orders striving to be good Christians who began to question the methods and disciplines of the Church. The Reformation came out of the heart of the Church. It was the subtle and obstinate Wycliffe who denied Transubstantiation and split off a living and progressive Protestantism from an ever more reactionary Church, who had the Bible translated into the vulgar tongue, and, together with his pupil, Jan Huss, begot the Reformation.

The spirit of Protestantism sprang from men who took their unquestioning Catholic faith with such seriousness that they could not but protest against the evil things they beheld about them. In the less critical eleventh century, in the days when Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII) was bracing up the solidarity of the Church by insisting on priestly celibacy and the complete detachment from normal human living that this involved, there had been an extraordinary willingness to believe the Catholic priesthood good and wise. Relatively it was wiser and better in those days. Great powers beyond

her spiritual functions had been entrusted to the Church, and very extraordinary freedoms. The tragedy of the Church is that she put her spiritual influence to evil ends and abused her freedoms without measure.

The Pope was the supreme lawgiver of Christendom, and his court at Rome the final and decisive court of appeal. The Church levied taxes; it had not only vast properties and a great income from fees, but it imposed a tax of a tenth, the tithe, upon its subjects. It did not call for this as a pious benefaction; it demanded it as a right. Steadily more and more of the nation's property fell into the dead hand (Mortmain) of the Church and paid its tribute to St. Peter. The clergy, on the other hand, claimed exemption from lay taxation.

This attempt to trade upon their peculiar prestige and evade their share in fiscal burdens was certainly one considerable factor in the growing dissatisfaction with the clergy. Apart from any question of justice, it was impolitic. It made taxes seem ten times more burthensome to those who had to pay. It made everyone resent the immunities of the Church.

And a still more extravagant and unwise claim made by the Church was the claim to the power of *dispensation*. It did not interpret right and wrong now; it was above right and wrong and it could make wrong right and right wrong. The Pope in many instances set aside the laws of the Church in individual cases; he allowed cousins to marry, permitted a man to have two wives, released men from vows. The Church's crowning folly in the sixteenth century was the sale of *indulgences*,

whereby the sufferings of the soul in purgatory could be commuted for a money payment.

By the dawn of the sixteenth century, the Church, blindly and rashly, had come to a final parting of the ways. The force of protest, that is to say of Protestantism, was gathering against it, and the alternatives, whether it would modernise or whether it would dogmatise or fight, were before it. It chose to fight and tyrannise.

Before the thirteenth century it had been customary for the Pope to make occasional inquests or enquiries into heresy in this region or that, but Innocent III found in the Dominicans a powerful instrument of suppression. The Inquisition was organised as a standing enquiry under their direction, and with fire and torture the Church set itself, through this instrument, to assail and weaken the human conscience in which its sole hope of world dominion resided. Before the thirteenth century the penalty of death had been inflicted but rarely upon heretics and unbelievers. Now in a hundred market-places in Europe the dignitaries of the Church watched the blackened bodies of its antagonists, for the most part poor and insignificant people, burn and sink pitifully, and their own great mission to mankind burn and sink with them into dust and ashes.

Chaucer, one of the most typical and commanding figures in English literature, in his *Canterbury Tales*, gives incidentally and inadvertently a picture of the state of opinion about the Church on the very eve of the impending Reformation. We have a company of pilgrims going to Canterbury—for a pilgrimage was then the

only way of taking a holiday in comparative security—and they are all, like Chaucer himself, nominally good Catholics. They are, so to speak, provisionally Catholics, there being no alternative. Except the enthusiasm of Lollardry. Yet their critical contempt for the methods and exactions of the Church is plain and outspoken, and the two most contemptible figures in his vivid album are two clerical officials, the summoner and the pardoner.

It is our misfortune that his contribution to English literature is practically unreadable in its original form. The language was not yet fixed and it underwent profound changes after his death in 1400. It was fixed by the translation of the Bible and the literary activities of the later Tudor period, and now the ordinary reader of English can read him comfortably only in such modernisations as that of J. U. Nicolson.

Chaucer was nearly sixty in 1400 and yet death took him by surprise and only a third of the writings he was collecting under the title of the *Canterbury Tales* had been assembled. Yet even so, they witness to his amazing versatility and have distinctive English qualities that were afterwards to reappear in the humorist in Shakespeare, in Fielding, in Dickens and a host of lesser story tellers down to such contemporary writers as Christopher Morley, and which are manifest in equal measure in no other literature.

All of them display that keen interest in individual facts and that distaste for dogmatic and enthusiastic final judgments which has characterised English thought and literature from its beginning. This sceptical mental-

ity, which is so manifest in the English make-up, ranges from a sort of obstinate, stupid and conservative unteachableness to a profound and explicit perception of the unreality of appearances, and the impossibility of ultimate solutions. There is every type of intermediate mentality in the English world, but they possess a family likeness. The British oaf and the British genius are born brothers.

This innate disposition to regard all existence as experimental and to distrust and reject the glib profundities of the religious "mystic" is incomprehensible to many Indian minds. Their objection finds typical expression in *Shakespeare through Eastern Eyes* by Mr. Ranjee G. Shahani, B.A., D.Litt., which has somehow got on to my reading desk. For "Shakespeare" we may substitute the Englishman.

Mr. Ranjee G. Shahani is oblivious to the obvious probability of a mixed origin for Shakespeare's plays, and he finds a confession of faith in any utterance of any character in any of them, and, regardless of the entirely provisional nature of language and of all human symbols, he lets loose at this sample Western with a voluminous smoke screen of pretentious gabble. This sort of thing:

"An Indian would say that Shakespeare had not probed far enough into the human soul and the Over-Soul we call God. Now the Oriental thinker is profoundly concerned not only in understanding these principles but in finding a relation between them. The fundamental thought of the Upanishads—writings con-

taining the most occult and mystical ideas of the Hindus —consists in the recognition of the oneness of the Brahman and Atman, of God and the Soul. This is also the quintessential principle of the Vedanta system. 'Who could breathe, who could exist,' declares the Kena Upanishad, 'if there were not the bliss of Brahma within the ether of his heart?' Sir Edwin Arnold rightly gauges the Indian spirit when he says that though 'inconceivable to the mind, this all-comprehensive Being is still a necessity of true thought, and veritable beyond every other conception of reality.'

"The Hindu *dharma* declares that man does not live by his appetites alone: he must live by his life of spirit also. *Moksha* is the goal indicated. *Moksha* is freedom from the perpetuity of incarnation. It is in the end the union of the finite with the Infinite—the merging of the individual soul with the illimitable ocean. In other words, this is the *nirvana* of the Buddha. . . .

"To the Oriental mind, religious mysticism is a sheer joy. The entire literature of India is steeped in this element. But when the Indian turns to Shakespeare he finds that this mystic quality is utterly absent. . . .

"Devotees of East and West declare that no joy transcends that which is derived from mystical experience. Roumi, Kabir, Meister Eckhart, Swedenborg, St. Theresa, St. John of the Cross, and many others, all bear witness to the same effect. Surely, there is nothing finer or higher for man than to know what, 'in the last analysis, holds the universe together.' This is the question that Faust asks himself, and so does every mystic. For Vive-

kananda, as for Ramakrishna, his master, 'the knowledge of Brahma is the ultimate end, the highest destiny of man.' . . .

"Mr. Middleton Murry, in harmony with the ancients, considers the poet as a *vates sacer*, bearing a direct message from God. . . .

" 'The poetry of mysticism,' says Miss Evelyn Underhill, 'might be defined on the one hand as a temperamental reaction to the vision of Reality; on the other, as a form of prophecy. As it is the special vocation of the mystical consciousness to mediate between two orders, going out in loving adoration towards God and coming home to tell the secrets of Eternity to other men; so the artistic self-expression of this consciousness has also a double character. It is love-poetry, but love-poetry which is often written with a missionary intention.'

"The Indian fails to find anything of this kind in Shakespeare. His poetry is not an outburst of ecstasy and exaltation. We discover this combination in the Persian mystics, in the Sufi poets, in a few Western bards, and in the Christian saints. We also detect this fusion in Kabir. Let us listen to one of his poems translated by the united efforts of Rabindranath Tagore and Miss Evelyn Underhill:

"Tell me, O swan, your ancient tale.
From what land do you come, O swan, to what shore will you fly?

Where would you take your rest, O swan, and what do you seek?

Even this morning, O swan, awake, arise and follow me!

"There is a land where no doubt nor sorrow have rule:
Where the terror of death is no more.

"There the woods of spring are a-bloom, and the fragrant scent 'He is I' is borne on the Wind:
There the bee of the heart is deeply immersed, and desires no other joy."

In the presence of this sort of ecstasy the broad stream of creative literature in England from Chaucer to the present day unites in making loud rude sceptical noises.

The first story in the Chaucer portfolio is the Knight's story of Palamon and Arcite, a lengthy and dignified story after the Italian, of an exalted nobility and chastity. Next to that, as this time it is no translation, and as it were a relief from that, the drunken miller tells his obscene story of how the carpenter was cuckolded and mocked by Nicholas the clerk and how Absalom the parish priest was mocked and disgusted.

Whereupon the reeve is moved to tell of the outrageous cuckolding of a miller, and the cook begins brightly with a spendthrift gentleman who "had a wife that kept, for countenance, a shop and whored to gain her sustenance," or, to quote the original, "hadde a wyf that heeld for contenance a shoppe, and swyved for hir sustenance." But this fragment of life ends abruptly. It was never finished.

The sailor follows and tells the story of a mercenary

woman and her passion for a monk, of which the moral is, "Invite no more monks to your house or inn," and then comes Madame Eglantine, the prioress, who tells a horrifying invention about the murder of a boy in a "Jewry" through which Christian boys were unwisely allowed to pass, and how, being murdered and buried, he still sang on to reveal his fate. That Madame Eglantine, we are told in the Prologue,

". . . was so charitable and piteous
That she would weep if she but saw a mouse
Caught in a trap, though it were dead or bled.
She had some little dogs, too, that she fed
On roasted flesh, or milk, or fine white bread.
But sore she'd weep if one of them were dead,
Or if men smote it with a rod to smart:
For pity ruled her, and her tender heart."

And this is the piteous way in which she deals with the Jews:

"With torture and with shameful death, each one,
The provost did these cursed Hebrews serve
Who of the murder knew, and that anon;
From justice to the villains he'd not swerve.
Evil shall have what evil does deserve.
And therefore, with wild horses, did he draw,
And after hang, their bodies, all by law."

And how she recalls the alleged "Ritual Murder" of Hugh of Lincoln:

"O you young Hugh of Lincoln, slain also
By cursed Jews, as is well known to all,
Since it was but a little while ago,
Pray you for us, sinful and weak, who call,
That, of His Mercy, God will still let fall
Something of grace, and mercy multiply,
For reverence of His Mother dear on high. Amen."

Chaucer himself is then called upon, and produces *Sir Thopas*, a cheerful burlesque of the old-fashioned romantic stories, until the host implores him in extremely foul language to discontinue. Whereupon he turns about and tells a tale of Melibeus and the wisdom and goodness of forgiving. Here the Lollards get a passing word from the sailor, "impatient at their zeal."

" 'I smell a Lollard in the wind,' quoth he.
'Ho, good men!' said our host, 'now hearken me;
Wait but a bit, for God's high passion do,
For we shall have a sermon ere we're through;

This Lollard here will preach to us somewhat.'
'Nay, by my father's soul, that he shall not!'
Replied the sailor. 'Here he shall not preach,
Nor comment on the gospels here, nor teach.
We all believe in the great God,' said he,
'But he would sow among us difficulty,
Or sprinkle cockles in our good clean corn.' "

In this promiscuous careless fashion the great portfolio spills its varied contents. The Wife of Bath, a companion piece to Mistress Quickly, and almost as great a figure of comedy, comes upon the scene. . . .

So we sample the state of mind of England on the very eve of the Reformation. The melange of intense amusement at individual character, with parody and gross laughter, is possible only because of the entire absence of any urgent positive convictions. And as it was in the beginning, so it is with English thought and art to this day.

Langland, who wrote the *Vision of Piers Plowman*, was a contemporary of Chaucer. His manuscript was recopied with variations and additions and passed from hand to hand. It witnesses to the same state of corruption and indifference on the part of those who ruled over the Church as does Chaucer, but its criticism of abuses is far bitterer. While Chaucer is essentially irreligious, Langland is a theologian, and, though he believes himself to be an entirely orthodox Christian, his doctrine is substantially a sort of Calvinistic Humanitarianism. His "Christ" is Everyman, the common man at your elbow. In the fourteenth century, recurrent epidemics, local famines, and storms of violence seemed to be in the natural order of things. Everyone was at least intermittently ill and most people were by our modern standards under-vitalised. News soaked about the world haphazard, was distorted or evaporated. The Black Death, the revolt of John Ball and the men of Kent, are ignored by both Chaucer and Langland, nor had they the slightest knowledge of Roger Bacon's vision of the possibilities of mental release and human welfare. Yet, unaware of each other and each after his fashion, such Englishmen were feeling their way out of the mental darkness of the mediæval world.

Not only the moral but the intellectual prestige of Rome was fading in the growing light of the times. Wycliffe (1320-1384) was a learned doctor at Oxford; for a time he was Master of Balliol; and he held various livings in the Church. Quite late in his life he began a series of outspoken criticisms of the corruption of the clergy and the unwisdom of the Church.

He organised a number of poor priests, the Wycliffites, to spread his ideas throughout England; and in order that people should judge between the Church and himself, he had the Bible translated into English.

He was a more learned and far abler man than either St. Francis or St. Dominic. He had supporters in high places and a great following among the people; and though Rome raged against him and ordered his imprisonment, he died a free man, still administering the sacraments as parish priest of Lutterworth.

The black and ancient spirit that was leading the Church to its destruction would not let his bones rest in his grave. By a decree of the Council of Constance, in 1415, his remains were ordered to be dug up and burnt, an order which was carried out, at the command of Pope Martin V, by Bishop Fleming in 1428. This desecration was not the act of some isolated fanatic; it was the official act of this Church we now indict.

All through four centuries of dwindling prestige, Rome, with a sort of senile obstinacy, persisted in its encroachments upon both the princes and peoples of Christendom, and still it was blind to the vulnerability of its own position in the face of the forces it was provoking against itself. The princes realised more and more clearly

the huge proportion of wealth in the Mortmain and the ever-growing tribute they paid without compensation to Rome. They lost their trust in ecclesiastical statesmen with a foot in either camp, and looked about them for more complaisant ministers. The people mocked at the all too frequent scandals in the convents and monasteries and at the worldliness of the higher ecclesiastics. Rome remained blind to the development of an upper and nether millstone about itself, and still stuck to its ever narrower and ever more exacting claims. The smouldering fire blazed up at last in open rebellion, the Reformation.

The Reformation had a threefold aspect. The Princes' Reformation wanted to stop the flow of money to Rome, and seize the moral authority, the educational power and the material possessions of the Church within their dominions; the Reformation, according to the people, sought to make Christianity a power against the unrighteousness of the rich and powerful; and a movement of Reformation within the Church, of which St. Francis of Assisi was the precursor, sought to restore the unifying virtue of the Church, and, through its virtue, its power.

The Princes had no intention of releasing the judgments of their subjects, more particularly when it took on the quality, as we should now say, of a revolutionary popular socialism. They sought merely to oust the papal influence and establish national churches dependent upon themselves. As England, Scotland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, North Germany and Bohemia broke away from the Roman communion, the princes and their min-

isters showed the utmost solicitude to keep the movement under control. Just as much Reformation as would sever the link with Rome they permitted. Anything beyond that, any dangerous break towards the primitive teachings of Jesus or the crude direct interpretation of the Bible, they resisted. The Established Church of England is one of the most typical and successful of the resulting compromises, still sacramental and sacerdotal.

The popular Reformation was very different and its spirit and quality varied from country to country. The wide spiritual upheavals of the time were at once more honest, more confused, more enduring, and less immediately successful than the reforms of the princes. Very few religious-spirited men had the daring to break away or the effrontery to confess that they had broken away from all authoritative teaching, and that they were now relying entirely upon their own minds and consciences. That required a very high intellectual courage. The general drift of the common man in this period in Europe was to set up his new acquisition, the Bible, as a counter-authority to the Church. This was the case with the great leader of German Protestantism, Martin Luther (1483-1546).

All over Germany, and, indeed, all over Western Europe, there were now men spelling over the black-letter pages of the newly-translated and printed Bible, over the Book of Leviticus and the Song of Solomon and the Revelation of St. John the Divine—strange and perplexing books—quite as much as over the simple and inspiring record of Jesus in the Gospels. Naturally, they produced grotesque interpretations. It is surprising that they

were not stranger and grotesquer. But the bulk of these new Bible students took what their consciences approved from the Bible, squared it to their sense of human right and dignity, and ignored its riddles and contradictions.

The strangest of these outbreaks of social and religious revolt occurred in Germany. It had a certain parallelism with the social and religious outbreak in Western Europe two centuries before. The religious disturbances were releasing men's criticism of social inequality, but now, instead of being illiterate believers in the established Christian story of the world, as they were told it in church, they had a storm of open doctrinal discussion about them and the Bible to puzzle over for themselves. The impulse, as ever, was to assume the entire corruption of the Roman Church, and to revert to a conception of an early Christianity when the faithful had their goods in common and the only rule for the true believer was the inner light in his conscience under the guidance of God. The Anabaptists (from Anabaptismo, which means to re-baptise, because they denied the validity of infant baptism) seized upon the town of Munster and set themselves to establish there a new Kingdom of God upon earth.

The inner light and an indigestion of Bible and speculative theology produced amazing results. Bockhold, a tailor, better known in history as John of Leyden, inspired by dreams and visions, ruled the town. Like Hitler, he was mentally unbalanced and he dominated his associates by his frenzied vehemence. They did not gainsay him, they followed his example. He changed the

name of Munster to Zion and declared himself the successor of King David. He restored polygamy, which as a matter of fact never has disappeared from Christendom so far as those who have had the means to practise it are concerned. He himself had four wives, one of whom he beheaded in the market-place with his own hand. For no recorded reason. For a year, says my authority, Munster was "a scene of unbridled profligacy," which means in effect that people did not draw the blinds. Then the town was stormed, and outraged social order tortured John and his leading associates with great ingenuity, finally executing and exposing their mangled bodies. So this German essay in social and religious revolution ended, and the masses were brought to heel. They had gone farther and fared worse than the populace of any other country.

All over Europe, a living and very active residuum of Protestants remained who declined to have their religion made over for them by their princes. They were a medley of sects, having nothing in common but their resistance to authoritative religion, whether of the Pope or of the State. In Germany, after the Anabaptist collapse, popular nonconformity was for the most part stamped out by the princes; in Great Britain dissent remained sober, powerful and various. Many of the differences in the behaviour of the German and the British peoples may be traceable to the relative suppression of free judgment in Germany at this time.

Most, but not all, of these Nonconformists and Dissenters held to the Bible as a divinely inspired and authoritative guide. This was a strategic rather than an

abiding position, and the modern drift of Nonconformity has been onward away from this original Bibliolatry toward a mitigated and sentimentalised recognition of the bare teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. Beyond the range of Nonconformity, beyond the range of professed Christianity at all, there was also now a great and growing mass of equalitarian belief and altruistic impulse, which released a smouldering innate sense of justice in the human make-up.

XIV

HOW HENRY VIII BECAME A PROTESTANT PRINCE

THE MOTIVES of the princes and the feelings of the masses fluctuated through the period of the Reformation very widely. Personal factors came into play. Henry VIII of England began his reign as a devout Roman Catholic. He wrote against heresy and was rewarded by the Pope with the title of Defender of the Faith. "*Fid. Def.*" is still on the obverse of many British coins. England seemed saved for Rome. Then his attention strayed from his wife Catherine of Aragon to a livelier young woman called Anne Boleyn, and, because the Church would not set aside his marriage and leave him free to marry this new mistress, he went over (carrying England with him) to the Protestant side.

Yet Rome had been very obliging to Henry in the matter of his marriage. Catherine of Aragon was the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, the Ferdinand and Isabella of Columbus and the conquest of Granada, and she was married to Arthur, the elder brother of Henry, in 1501. Both bride and bridegroom were then sixteen years old. They were childless, and Prince Arthur died in the following year. But the papal policy, which was then hostile to France, dictated a close asso-

ciation between Spain and England, and, with a complete disregard of its own teachings, the Holy See granted a dispensation to allow her to marry Henry. The dispensation was granted in 1503, but the young prince showed no great appetite for the lady, and the actual union only occurred six years later.

Catherine was plain to look upon, thick-set and irritatingly pious, obstinate and well-educated. During that interval Henry's youthful passions had found an outlet elsewhere, and he had an illegitimate son, Henry, whom he afterwards made Duke of Richmond. Catherine, poor young woman, had a dull time meanwhile. This tepid marriage of policy produced six children all of whom died in infancy or were stillborn, except one daughter, Mary, and popular opinion attributed this to the divine resentment against incest, with which idea Henry was only too disposed to agree, as his weariness with Catherine increased. He developed conscientious scruples over that papal dispensation and betrayed a disposition to legitimise his bastard the Duke of Richmond, to whom he gave precedence not only over all the peers of the realm but over Catherine's daughter Mary.

Here was a problem which evoked all the intricate insincerity of the Roman system. It had swallowed that dispensation from its own doctrine. Could it now regurgitate?

The great and ingenious Cardinal Wolsey suggested a quiet little suit against the King for incest, to release him from his bonds. There was much coming and going of the perplexed learned, of University doctors and papal legates. A divorce was out of the question if the dispen-

sation and marriage were invalid; then plainly the King was free, and the subsequent negotiations turned upon that point. The more fervently the King wanted his Anne Boleyn, the more convinced he was that he had been living in mortal sin with Catherine. A considerable amount of pride and obstinacy in Catherine's make-up frustrated the Church in its efforts to get her to retire to a nunnery and cease her resistance to the annulment. The Church veered round to her side. Pope Clement issued a brief forbidding the King to make a second marriage and commanding him to restore Catherine's connubial rights. And so Henry broke with Rome and England came down on the Protestant side.

XV

THE COUNTER REFORMATION

THE REFORMATION had caught the Church of Rome in a state of lax internal discipline, exasperating aggression and intolerance and blindness to the drift of worldly events. But her prestige was still very great, there were multitudes of the perplexed but still obedient Faithful, and the self-seeking princes and influential owners of property felt a deeper menace of popular release and criticism beneath the Reformation.

The Roman Catholic Church, no longer *the* Catholic Church, woke up to the realities of her position, to the threat of complete destruction at no very distant date unless she organised herself to resist.

The Reformation, the expropriation of the monastic properties and the revolt against the ascendancy of Rome, lasted for less than a century, and then it was overtaken by the Counter Reformation of the alarmed and awakened Roman Church. It was a belated awakening, and its history unfolds the same record, on an intensified scale of confused motives, levity of purpose, obstinate insistence upon freakish doctrinal points, the fear of death that arises from belief in an incalculable future life and in a pitilessly vindictive deity, amenable only to

the magic of orthodox formulæ, which hitherto had confused and had now split Christendom.

The Counter Reformation fell back upon the ideal of Christendom as an obedient family of nations under the parental guidance of the Pope. In France, where the issue was fought out very typically, the Church directed the reaction to a revival of the tradition of Joan of Arc, the associate of that abominable torturer of children, Gilles de Rais, Marshal of France, and adopted as its symbol and banner the double cross of Lorraine—the banner and symbol to-day of Charles de Gaulle, that strange protégé of the British Foreign Office. The Holy League (La Sainte Ligue) organised the Counter Reformation under that symbol. There was a phase of attempted compromise broken by the Roman Catholics, who murdered a number of Huguenots assembled for divine worship in a barn at Poissy. A fluctuating civil war ensued. Treaties of peace were made when no peace was possible. Coligny, outstanding Huguenot leader, was assassinated and matters culminated in the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve (August 1572).

The initiative for the crime rests with Catherine de Medici. Disquieted by the growing influence of Admiral Coligny, who against her wishes was endeavouring to draw Charles IX into a war with Spain, she resolved to have him murdered. The first attempt failed, however, and Catherine then determined to massacre all the Huguenot leaders. She got Coligny in the general bag. The massacre began on August 24, St. Bartholomew's Day, at daybreak, and continued in Paris till September 17th. From Paris, it spread to the provinces. The Duc de

Longueville in Picardy, Chabot-Charny (son of Admiral Chabot) at Dijon, the Comte de Matignon (1525-97) in Normandy and other provincial governors refused to authorise the massacres. François Hotman estimates the number killed in the whole of France at 50,000. Catherine de Medici received the congratulations of all the Catholic powers, and Pope Gregory XIII commanded bonfires to be lighted and a medal to be struck.

A sturdy remnant of Huguenots remained and was able to hold out against the murder policy of the pontiff. He had rejoiced too soon. Sufficient Protestants had survived for an effective rally. Many of them, like Condé and Henry IV of Navarre, escaped that night of murder by a precipitate and quite temporary conversion to Catholicism.

This Henry IV is an outstanding figure in this history, and one very typical of the times. He was of Protestant upbringing and throughout his life his soundly Protestant bias was manifest. He was a wit and a rake and he suffered from, and was evidently greatly entertained by, the temptations natural to an exceptionally "charming" person. When he found the Holy League strongly established in Paris against him, he took the wind out of its intolerant sails by becoming a Catholic himself. "Paris," he jested, "was well worth a Mass." But he saw to it that the Huguenots got something like active protection from another St. Bartholomew's Eve by the Edict of Nantes, and the protective vigilance of his great minister Sully gave the common people roads, canals, industries and a "fowl in the pot" on Sunday for every peasant.

The Edict of Nantes was revoked by King Louis XIV. He was the Most Christian King and eldest son of the Church, ruler not only of the bodies of his subjects but of their souls. He felt himself called upon to establish the unity of the faith and to repel with the hand of orthodoxy all Dissenters, Huguenots, Jansenists and Quietists. The Huguenots had long enjoyed freedom of worship and had prospered conspicuously in the fields of industry, agriculture and commerce. The Compagnie de Saint-Sacrament resented these immunities, and through its influence between 1661 and 1685 the Huguenots were exposed to increasingly heavy penalties and successfully excluded from the States-General, the diplomatic service, and the municipalities, and deprived of their hospitals, colleges, academies and schools. Fines proving inadequate, soldiers were quartered upon the recalcitrant by Louvois and encouraged to behave with the utmost brutality (the dragonnades) until at last Louis revoked the Edict of Nantes altogether (1685), as being out of date and no longer necessary in a re-unified France, re-unified largely by massacre. There followed on the part of the Huguenots an emigration *en masse*, to the great benefit of the trade and industries of London.

Still later came the revolt of the Camisards and its savage suppression and a civil war in the Cevennes, which held the Royal Armies in check from 1703 to 1711, at a time when the kingdom was threatened with invasion. So it was that the true Church defended itself, reckless even of the safety of the state which sustained it.

In 1665 one of these Roman Catholic massacres of Protestants was in progress in Savoy. For a considerable

period a remnant of the Waldenses had escaped the pious murder storms that were eliminating French Protestantism, under the protection of the Duke of Savoy, but he was so ill advised as to respond to the solicitations of the Church and join in the fun of massacre. He killed a lot, but those who escaped into the mountains sent an appeal to England. England was then in a phase of extreme Protestantism under the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. A national fast was ordered, £40,000 was collected for the immediate relief of the victims, and immediate hostilities from the sea were threatened. So high had the Protestant régime raised the prestige of the country that the Duke collapsed at once. The occasion was made memorable by Milton, whose indignant sonnet is one of the greatest in the language. It runs as follows:

"Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold;
Ev'n them who kept Thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipp'd stocks and stones,
Forget not: in Thy book record their groans,
Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese that roll'd
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To Heav'n. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who having learn'd Thy way
Early may fly the Babylonian woe."

Milton is one of the strangest figures English Protestantism has ever produced, a combination of colossal

learning, religious independence and a passion for outspoken truth and rational action, strange to controversialists upon whatever side in those days of conflict. He had manifest weaknesses. He had so great a regard for his personal appearance that he preferred to go blind rather than wear spectacles. But he could anticipate our modern ideas by such wisdom as this:

". . . as good almost kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life. 'Tis true no age can restore a life, whereof perhaps there is no great loss; and revolutions of ages do not oft recover the loss of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole nations fare the worse. We should be wary, therefore, what persecution we raise against the living labours of public men, how spill that seasoned life of man, preserved and stored up in books; since we see a kind of homicide may thus be committed; sometimes a kind of martyrdom; and if it extended to the whole impression, a kind of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elemental life, but strikes at that ethereal and soft essence, the breath of reason itself; slays an immortality rather than a life. . . .

"Wholesome meats to a vitiated stomach differ little or nothing from unwholesome; and best books to a naughty mind are not unapplicable to occasions of evil. Bad meats will scarce breed good nourishment in the healthi-

est concoction; but herein the difference is of bad books, that they to a discreet and judicious reader serve in many respects to discover, to confute, to forewarn, and to illustrate. . . . Good and evil, we know, in the field of this world, grow up together almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good is so involved and interwoven with the knowledge of evil, and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be discerned, that those confused seeds which were imposed upon Psyche as an incessant labour to cull out and sort asunder, were not more intermixed. . . .

"Lords and Commons of England! consider what nation it is whereof ye are, and whereof ye are the governors; a nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious and piercing spirit; acute to invent, subtile and sinewy to discourse, not beneath the reach of any point that human capacity can soar to. . . .

"Though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously, by licensing and prohibiting, to misdoubt her strength. Let her and falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter? . . ."

That was written nearly three centuries ago. Yet still the obedient Roman Catholic wears his blinkers and the Nazis celebrated their accession to power ten years ago by a great burning of books.

About eighty years before Milton was born, a new wave of zealotry, the development of the Jesuit organisation, the "Society of Jesus," had occurred in Spain and marked a further stage in the moral deterioration of the dying yet obstinately aggressive Roman Church.

XVI

THE JESUITS

THE FOUNDER OF THE JESUITS was a tough and gallant young Spaniard named Inigo Lopez de Recalde of Loyola. Loyola was his place of origin and there, until his vow of poverty, he had an estate. He was clever and dexterous and inspired by a passion for pluck, hardihood and rather showy glory. His love affairs were frequent, free and picturesque. In 1521 the French took the town of Pampeluna, in Spain, from the Emperor Charles V, and Ignatius was one of the defenders. His legs were smashed by a cannon ball, and he was taken prisoner. One leg was badly set and had to be broken again, and these painful and complex operations nearly cost him his life. He received the last sacraments. In the night, thereafter, he began to mend, and presently he was convalescent but facing the prospect of a life in which he would perhaps always be a cripple.

His thoughts turned to the adventure of religion. Sometimes he would think of a certain great lady, and how, in spite of his broken state, he might yet win her admiration by some amazing deed; and sometimes he would think of being in some especial and personal way the Knight of Christ. In the midst of these confusions, one night as he lay awake, he tells us, a new great lady

claimed his attention; he had a vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary carrying the Infant Christ in her arms. "Immediately a loathing seized him for the former deeds of his life." He resolved to give up all further thoughts of earthly women, and to lead a life of absolute chastity and devotion to the Mother of God. He projected great pilgrimages and a monastic life.

His method of taking his vows marks him the countryman of Don Quixote. He had regained his strength, and he was riding out into the world rather aimlessly, a penniless soldier of fortune with little but his arms and the mule on which he rode, when he fell in with a Moor. They went on together and talked, and presently disputed about religion. The Moor was the better-educated man; he had the best of the argument, he said offensive things about the Virgin Mary that were difficult to answer, and parted triumphantly. The young Knight of Our Lady was boiling with shame and indignation. He hesitated whether he should go after the Moor and kill him or pursue the pilgrimage he had in mind. At a fork in the road he left things to his mule, which spared the Moor.

He came to the Benedictine Abbey of Montserrat near Manresa, and here he imitated that peerless hero of mediæval romance, Amadis de Gaul, and kept an all-night vigil before the Altar of the Blessed Virgin. He presented his mule to the abbey, he gave his worldly clothes to a beggar, laid his sword and dagger upon the altar, and clothed himself in a rough sackcloth garment and hempen shoes. He then took him to a neighbouring hospice and gave himself up to scourgings and austerities.

For a whole week he fasted absolutely. Thence he went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

For some years he wandered, consumed with the idea of founding a new order of religious knighthood, but not knowing how to set about the enterprise. He enlisted other enthusiasts, but like himself they were zealous and indignant young men. At first they even lacked a priest in the company who could officiate for them. Loyola became more and more aware of his own illiteracy, and the Inquisition, which was beginning to take an interest in his proceedings, forbade him to attempt to teach others until he had spent at least four years in study. It seems to have been very doubtful about him.

His idea was essentially an idea of a fighting company; the Church, he realised, was now carrying on a defensive war and needed a fighting force which would fight with the unquestioning obedience of disciplined soldiers and with all the methods of strategy, surprise and camouflage that belligerence involves. Everywhere there was doubt and challenge. A Moor could talk openly in Spain. Luther had burnt a papal bull of excommunication a year or so before. It never entered into Loyola's head that there might be an adequate reason for these denials and repudiation. If such a thought had come to him he would have rejected it with horror. The world was in rebellion against the Faith, and that rebellion had to be stamped out by every means in his power.

Just as for soldiers of the old type the Army is everything, so in the new fighting force the Society had to be everything; blind uncritical obedience to orders was

the Society's first law, it was a complete surrender of individual thought and judgment, an entire abandonment of freedom. In a letter to his followers at Coimbra he declared that the general of the order stands in the place of God, without reference to his personal wisdom, piety or discretion; that any obedience which falls short of making the superior's will one's own, in inward affection as well as in outward effect, is lax and imperfect; that going beyond the letter of command, even in things abstractly good and praiseworthy, is disobedience, and that the "sacrifice of the intellect" is the third and greatest grade of obedience, well pleasing to God, when the inferior not only wills what the superior wills, but thinks what he thinks, submitting to his judgment, so far as it is possible for the will to influence and lead.

The formula of the final Jesuit vow, after a series of preparatory stages extending over years, runs as follows: "I promise to Almighty God, before His Virgin Mother and the whole heavenly host, and to all standing by; and to thee, Reverend Father General of the Society of Jesus, *holding the place of God,* and to thy successors, Perpetual Poverty, Chastity and Obedience; and according to it a peculiar care in the education of boys according to the form contained in the Apostolic Letters of the Society of Jesus and in its Constitution."

Ignatius himself laid down the rule that an inferior was bound to make all necessary representations to his superior so as to guide him in imposing a precept of obedience. When a superior knows the views of his inferior and still commands, it is because he is aware of other sides of the question which appear of greater im-

portance than those that the inferior has brought forward.

The Jesuits were to find their principal work in the world and in direct and immediate contact with mankind. To seek spiritual perfection in a retired life of contemplation and prayer did not seem to Ignatius to be the best way of reforming the evils which had brought about the revolt from Rome. He withdrew his followers from this sort of retirement, except as a mere temporary preparation for later activity; he made habitual intercourse with the world a prime duty; and to this end he rigidly suppressed all such external peculiarities of dress or rule as tended to put obstacles in the way of his followers acting freely as emissaries, agents or missionaries in the most various places and circumstances. The Jesuit had no home; the whole world was his parish. Mobility and cosmopolitanism were of the very essence of the Society.

Their work had to be propaganda; teaching and the insinuation by every possible means of the authority and policy of the Church. Their teaching work was indisputably good for the time. As the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* puts it: "At a time when primary or even secondary education had in most places become a mere effete and pedantic adherence to obsolete methods, they were bold enough to innovate, both in system and material. They not merely taught and catechised in a new, fresh and attractive manner, besides establishing free schools of good quality, but provided new school books for their pupils which were an enormous advance on those they found in use; so that for nearly three centuries the Jesu-

its were accounted the best schoolmasters in Europe, as they confessedly were in France until their forcible suppression in 1901. Francis Bacon succinctly gives his opinion of the Jesuit teaching in these words: 'As for the pedagogical part, the shortest rule would be, Consult the schools of the Jesuits; for nothing better has been put in practice.' *De Augmentis*, vi. 4.

"Again, when most of the continental clergy had sunk, more or less, into the moral and intellectual slough which is pictured for us in the writings of Erasmus and the *Epistolae obscurorum virorum*, the Jesuits won back respect for the clerical calling by their personal culture and the unimpeachable purity of their lives. These qualities they have carefully maintained; and probably no large body of men in the world has kept up, on the whole, an equally high average of intelligence and conduct. . . . It is in the mission field, however, that their achievements have been most remarkable. Whether toiling among the teeming millions in Hindustan and China, labouring among the Hurons and Iroquois of North America, governing and civilising the natives of Brazil and Paraguay in the missions and 'reductions,' or ministering, at the hourly risk of his life, to his fellow-Catholics in England under Elizabeth and the Stuarts, the Jesuit appears alike devoted, indefatigable, cheerful and worthy of hearty admiration and respect."

Unfortunately for the world the Jesuits have never been able to keep clear of politics. It was against their written professions, if these are to be taken seriously, but it was manifestly among their inevitable temptations. They had their share, direct or indirect, in embroiling

states, concocting conspiracies and kindling wars. They had a large share in fanning the flames of political hatred against the Huguenots under the last two Valois kings; they plotted obstinately against England in the reign of Elizabeth; their share in the Thirty Years' War and in the religious miseries of Bohemia is indisputable. Their influence in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the expulsion of the Protestants from France is manifest. The ruin of the Stuart cause under James II, and the establishment of the Protestant succession was due largely to their clumsy meddling. In a number of cases where the evidence against them is defective, it is at least an unfortunate coincidence that there is always direct proof of some Jesuit having been in communication with the actual agents engaged.

Gradually the reputation of the Jesuit as a dangerous zealot with an inordinate appetite for power increased. In France the Jesuits joined if they did not originate the league against Henry of Navarre; absolution was refused by them to those who would not join in the Guise rebellion. The assassination of Henry III in the interests of the league and the wounding of Henry IV in 1594 by Chastel, a pupil of theirs, revealed the quality of their disposition. In England the political schemings of Parsons were no small factors in the odium which fell on the Society at large; and his determination to capture the English Catholics as an appanage of the Society was an object lesson to the rest of Europe of a restless ambition and lust of domination which were to find many imitators. A general congregation of the Society in 1594 passed a decree forbidding its members to participate in

public affairs; a decree there was evidently no disposition to enforce. Parsons was allowed to keep on with his work, and other Jesuits in France for many years directed affairs of state. In 1605 took place in England the Gunpowder Plot, in which Henry Garnet, the superior of the Society in England, was implicated. That the Jesuits were the direct instigators of the plot there is no evidence, but they were in close touch with the conspirators, of whose designs Garnet had a general knowledge. There is now no reasonable doubt that he and other Jesuits were legally accessories, and that the condemnation of Garnet as a traitor was substantially just.

Their hostility to the Huguenots forced on the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, and their war against their Jansenist opponents did not cease till the very walls of Port Royal were demolished in 1710, even to the very abbey church itself, and the bodies of the dead taken with every mark of insult from their graves and literally flung to the dogs to devour. Their Japanese mission vanished in blood in 1651; and though many Jesuits died with their converts bravely as martyrs for the Faith, it is impossible to acquit them of extreme political provocation.

We need not expand this indictment further. Almost every country in Europe except England had at one time or another been provoked to expel the Jesuits, and, as we shall show presently, their obdurate persistence in evil-doing continues to this day. They are to-day the most active front of the Roman Catholic residuum.

XVII

THE CONTINUAL SHRINKAGE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

For it is now only a residuum. The number of practising Roman Catholics is enormously exaggerated. Steadily throughout this black record of its aggressive intolerance, the Roman Catholic Church has exuded and persecuted vitality and contracted into the actively malignant and still dwindling body it is to-day. Joseph McCabe has made a vigorous examination of its numerical claims.

McCabe is one of the most able and interesting and learned of all anti-Catholic writers, and, like all the most thoroughgoing reformers in the past, he sprang from the bosom of the Church. He began life with a soundly Roman Catholic upbringing; he was born in 1867, he was a Franciscan monk at sixteen, a priest at twenty-three, Professor of Scholastic Philosophy for four years, and then Rector of Buckingham College. His clerical title, which he has ceased to use, is the Very Reverend Father Anthony. He broke away from the Church in 1896 and he married three years later. One might describe him as the ultimate Protestant, that is to say he has no scrap of religious belief left in him; he has long since realised that whatever Being may sustain this universe it can have

nothing in common with the vain and vindictive Bogy which priestcraft has elaborated to scare and subjugate mankind. He writes with an erudition and an amount of knowledge that put him by himself as the most capable critic the papal system has ever had. I shall venture to cite his extremely disrespectful account of a Roman Conclave later in this chapter. But first I will avail myself of a little tract of his on the Black International (Second Series, No. 13), to sustain my statement of the shrinkage of the Roman remnant of Christendom.

The number of Roman Catholics in the world claimed by Catholic authorities, he points out, varies astonishingly. A Catholic expert in the new *Encyclopaedia Americana* gives 294,583,000, the (British) *Catholic Directory* gives 398,277,000. "Every priest," says McCabe, "makes an annual report to his bishop—I have assisted in this job—and these reports provide national totals which are forwarded to Rome. Two things, amongst others, are reported: how many Catholics in the loose sense—i.e. baptised persons—there are in the parish and, particularly, how many of them are *real* Catholics as testified by attendance at Church on Sundays and the number of confessions at Easter. But neither local prelates nor the Vatican ever publish these results. The nearest approach to an official international annual is *Orbis Catholicus*, and it gives no world-total; though if you add up the statements for each country the total runs to about 350,000,000.

"The sum-total is usually compiled by an entirely dishonest method, but even professors of sociology who include the Churches as socially valuable agencies never

condemn this. Countries which, from geographical or historical conditions, never accepted the Reformation are still called Catholic countries, and the whole population is usually included in the Catholic total, or only from 1 to 5 per cent. is allowed for Protestants, Jews, and—though they generally form the largest body—sceptics. These countries (France and its colonies, Italy, Spain and its former colonies, Portugal and its colonies, Spanish America, and generally Austria) with a total population of more than 200,000,000 make the bulk of the Catholic figure. For other countries the figures are equally fantastic. The Catholic writer in the *Encyclopaedia Americana* gives 11,000,000 to Russia, where no Catholic claims more than 3,000,000 and there are now certainly not 300,000; 39,000,000 to Austria and Hungary, which have had for a quarter of a century a total (mixed) population of only 15,000,000; 24,000,000 to Germany, where the Church is in ruins; 35,000,000 to France, which is at least five times too much.

"In examining these figures we must clearly understand the conditions. What is a Catholic or a member of the Roman Church? The Canon Law is simple and peremptory: everybody who once received Catholic baptism" (McCabe, *inter alios!*). "American Catholic writers are uneasy about this arrogant theory of their Church that you *cannot* secede from it, and they are shifty and evasive in defining what they mean when they claim that there are more than 20,000,000 Catholics in the United States. In a fantastic—Catholics call it a scientific—work, *Has the Immigrant Kept the Faith?* (1925), Fr. G. Shaugnessy says that by Catholic he

means one who has received Catholic baptism, marries in the Church and has his children baptised, and at death receives the last sacraments. He at once admits that the third condition is 'rather theoretical'—he is perfectly aware that it is not taken into account—and he ought to know, and probably does know, that Irish, Italian and other Catholics commonly marry in the Church and allow the mothers or relatives to have the children baptised though they have definitely abandoned it. From questions given in Moore's *Will America become Catholic?* (1931) it appears that in Catholic periodicals Fr. Shaugnessy, a professor at a Catholic college, is accustomed to give the usual definition of a Catholic: one who was baptised in infancy. This is the strict law of the Church, and it is the guiding principle of the priests who compile the parochial statistics from which the national and world-totals are compiled."

I will not go on with McCabe's contemptuous analysis. He emerges with a possible maximum of 180 million Catholics, including a large proportion of children (50 millions) and illiterates, probably 100 millions, in the whole world population of 2,000 millions. The Pope, he says, certainly has not more than 50 million subjects upon this planet who can write their own names. And all over the world where statistics are still available, the number of Catholic criminals and prostitutes is out of all proportion to their numbers in the general population.

The Very Reverend Father Antony writes with a ruthless confidence in his knowledge that I cannot emulate. His well-known *History of the Popes* (Watts & Co., 1939) is a classic which every student of religious

history must study, but when it comes to controversy a certain restraint falls from him, and so, since I wish to make this book as unaggressive as possible, I will quote only one other of his more controversial *Black International Tracts* (Second Series, No. 11):

"Three times," says he, "since 1900, the voters have put at the head of their Church (a world-wide business with an income of hundreds of millions of dollars a year at its central office alone) a man who would have failed to run a $3,000 store. I have just read fifteen Catholic books—British, French, Italian and German—on them and I ought to know them. . . .

"Let us consider the Papal election (Conclave) in itself. . . . The theory you probably know. Sixty or seventy cardinals elect the Pope. They are locked and carpentered in a special part of the Vatican palace, where each now has a suite of rooms—in the old days when they were all locked in a chapel day and night for weeks the odour was not one of sanctity—until one of the rival candidates gets two-thirds of the votes. There is much praying to the Holy Ghost for guidance, but they still have to be locked in and watched lest they also consult profane persons outside. . . .

"In practice the Conclave is much more human than the theory. Ever since the Church of Rome became rich in the fourth century there has been a spirited struggle for the control of the treasury. As early as 366 more than 160 of the supporters of the rival candidates had to be buried, and as late as 1492 the 'butcher's bill' was more than 200. This struggle is now more refined; though when the Pope says his first Mass he still has no-

bles at hand to take the first sip of the wine and see that it has not been poisoned.

"A feverish intrigue warms Rome before a Pope's death. Broadly there are two schools of cardinals: the 'zealots'—think of the hairy hill-men of Kentucky who roar out the hymn 'Old-Fashioned Religion'—and the 'politicals' or practical men. There are generally four or five cardinals who fancy their chances and carry the bets of the Romans, and they canvass the voters of the rival schools and let it be known that they are grateful to supporters. Each party selects one champion, and they enter the Conclave with the Holy Ghost on their lips and the name of a candidate in their pockets. . . .

"They pray and talk for an hour or two and then take a vote (written). The two favourites are bound to have, perhaps, a third of the votes each, and the nibbling at each other's parties and the neutrals begins. There is still generally a deadlock, and they turn to the string of 'also ran.' A few colourless outsiders are tried until one gets the two-thirds vote. He is generally advanced in age or an invalid, so that the struggle may be resumed in a few years. The lucky man who at last gets the required majority murmurs 'I am not worthy' and—because a Pope was once taken seriously when he said this—makes for the pontifical robes, which are waiting (in three sizes). Then they take him out on the balcony to show to the public. The historical record of these Conclaves by Petrucelli della Gattina beats the history of Tammany for clean fun.

"An Italian Catholic priest, G. Berthelet (*Storia e Rivilazoni sul Conclave*, 1904) says of the election of the 'great' Leo XIII:

" 'If Pius IX had foreseen the election of Leo XIII he would have excommunicated him, but if Leo XIII had foreseen that at his death the cardinals would vote for Giuseppe Sarto, he would have excommunicated the lot of them.'

"Sarto, Archbishop of Venice, was a good old man of peasant origin. His sister kept the village pub. He loved to talk broad Venetian with a countryman and shock the more starchy cardinals. But what else could the poor voters do? For years Cardinal Rampolla, the ablest of them, a lean black-visaged lynx-eyed schemer like the present Pope, had worked for the position. The candidate of the zealots was Gatti . . . As that very sober and weighty French newspaper *Le Temps* said in its account of this Conclave: 'The Holy Ghost was clearly making for the French candidate (Rampolla) but the Triplice (Triple Alliance) headed him off. . . .' "

Such is the "Catholic atmosphere" in Rome to-day, and such is the present phase of the disintegration of the Christendom of our ancestors. Even in comparison with Fascism and the Nazi adventure, Roman Catholicism is a broken and utterly desperate thing, capable only of malignant mischief in our awakening world. The Pope is now the head of only about fifty millions of semi-literates scattered about the planet, trailing after them a blind entirely ignorant multitude of "Faithful"; a following of ignorant men, women and children that does not exceed at the outside 120 millions all told.

With that the Pope sets himself to hold back and frustrate the secular modernisation of the world.

XVIII

THE STRUGGLE FOR BRITAIN

THE SCHEME OF THIS ANALYSIS of Roman Catholicism would be incomplete without a few notes to remind the reader of the curious conflict that has been waged from the Reformation onward by the Roman Catholic Church in order to recover its ascendancy over Britain.

None of the British mixture of peoples can be described as passionately religious. None of them indeed seem to be passionate in any respect. They have as little liking and sympathy for the *crime passionel* as they have for the wild-eyed devotee in a manifest hair shirt. One can write a sort of cento of their pet phrases. Their weakness and their greatest danger at the present time is their disposition to be "reasonable," to let bygones be bygones, not to cry over spilt milk, to live and let live, and believe that all other people in the world have a similarly reasonable equable temperament. They will fight for points, "play the game," and they have to be smacked good and hard and spat upon and generally insulted before they can be induced to fight all out. They are rather pleased to lose every battle but the last, "muddle through" and then make a "good humoured" settlement that loses the peace. They are bad allies for weaker peoples because of these trustful settlements they will

make. Leave them alone, don't rouse them, and you may steal the keys of the safe. Many Englishmen think it is bad form to count their change, and they detest cash registers. But when they realise they have been cheated and have got something they didn't bargain for, they may explode dangerously.

Maybe it is the Gulf Stream or something geographical that makes them like this, maybe it is the fact that living, so to speak, at the end of Europe, so that for centuries, until America came into the world, every sort of man came to England and nobody went away, they are of so mixed a strain that they believe nothing decidedly. Compromise and lack of emphasis is in their nature.

If I wanted to brag about the English people; if I were briefed for that purpose and had no way of evading so uncongenial a task, I should certainly associate this disposition to indifference in religious and social dogmas with the very exceptional share they have had in the inspiration and early organisation of scientific research.

They are disposed to put a note of interrogation to every positive assertion, because they have a profound sense of the present imperfections of language and every sort of symbol and statement. They feel that things may be so to a certain extent and yet not *quite* so. They realise that our minds are at their best extremely inperfect implements. Continually we seem to be approaching truth, but every actuality we conquer opens up fresh questions. This approach to truth goes on unendingly, and every generation has its achievements and its fresh stimulus to further growth. That is not simply the disposition of the scientifically trained Englishman; it corre-

sponds to something like an instinct in the common sort of people. They detest all precise and binding and conclusive statement; they *feel* something wrong about it, and they despise dogmatic enthusiasm. They invented the word "humbug" and they are far less patriotic than the naturalised alien. When they are vigorous they are insubordinate and derisive, and when they are devitalised they are apathetic and unconvinced.

Equable. So the British are now and so they have always been. I have noted how England became Protestant. Would she have remained Catholic but for Anne Boleyn? That is not so certain. Protestantism leaves them at their ease in many ways, but, as we have seen throughout this study, the Papacy has never been able to refrain from provocation. It has never let Anglo-Saxons sleep. By its very nature it has to encroach until some sort of explosion occurs.

We have given a brief account of heresies in Chapter IV. The British have never started an aggressive heresy. But they have resented being pushed about. They have jeered at and criticised the pretensions of the Church, they have questioned this and questioned that, destructively, but they have never begun the struggle. The Church made a dogma of Transubstantiation. Wycliffe put a query against it that split the Church in twain, but he remained in the Church to his death. The majority of the Canterbury Pilgrims, as we have noted in Chapter XIV, are easy-going mockers. You cannot tell whether that composite person, Shakespeare, was a Catholic or a Protestant or, like his Macbeth, an out-and-out atheist. All three went to the making of him. The official Eng-

lish Reformation ended in that remarkable compromise, the Established Church and the Thirty-nine Articles, which was just Catholic enough to give the Papacy and the Jesuits hope for quiet reinstatement. Then, just as the handcuffs were on again and the gag nearly fixed, came the inevitable awakening and explosion.

The history of England since the Reformation could be written as a recurrent and generally combined attack of the Roman Catholic Church and the totalitarian state (of which perhaps Hobbes' *Leviathan* is the completest expression and the Divine Right of Kings the political claim) upon the common-sense agnosticism and individualism of the English people. Always it is the same story of a renewed assault, apparent success and then explosion.

In the phase of Puritanism that followed the passing of the Elizabethans we find the English in an unsuspicious phase, leading the lives they were disposed to live, and feeling no threat to their way of life. In J. R. Green's *Short History of the English People*, we find a portrait sketch of Colonel Hutchinson, one of the Regicides, which I will quote with a few abridgments.

"With the close of the Elizabethan age, indeed, the intellectual freedom which had marked it faded insensibly away: the bold philosophical speculations which Sidney had caught from Bruno, and which had brought on Marlowe and Raleigh the charge of atheism, died, like her own religious indifference, with the Queen. But the lighter and more elegant sides of the Elizabethan culture harmonised well enough with the temper of the Puritan gentleman.

"The figure of Colonel Hutchinson, one of the Regicides, stands out from his wife's canvas with the grace and tenderness of a portrait by Vandyck. She dwells on the personal beauty which distinguished his youth, on 'his teeth even and white as the purest ivory,' 'his hair of brown, very thickset in his youth, softer than the finest silk, curling with great loose rings at the ends.' Serious as was his temper in graver matters, the young squire of Owthorpe was fond of hawking, and piqued himself on his skill in dancing and fence. His artistic taste showed itself in a critical love of 'paintings, sculpture and all liberal arts,' as well as in the pleasure he took 'in his gardens, in planting groves and walks and forest trees.'

"His life was orderly and methodical, sparing of diet and of self-indulgence; he rose early, 'he never was at any time idle, and hated to see anyone else so.' The new sobriety and self-restraint marked itself even in his change of dress. The gorgeous colours and jewels of the Renascence disappeared. Colonel Hutchinson 'left off very early the wearing of anything that was costly, yet in his plainest negligent habit appeared very much a gentleman.'

"The loss of colour and variety in life was compensated by solid gains. Greatest among these was the new conception of social equality. Their common brotherhood in Christ annihilated that overpowering sense of social distinctions which characterised the age of Elizabeth. The proudest noble recognised a spiritual equality in the poorest 'saint.' It was felt even more in the new dignity and self-respect with which the con-

sciousness of their 'calling' invested the classes beneath the rank of the gentry. . . .

"It is in a Puritan of the middle class that we find the fullest and noblest expression of the new influence which was leavening the temper of the time. John Milton is not only the highest, but the completest type of Puritanism. He was born when it began to exercise a direct power over English politics and English religion; he died when its effort to mould them into its own shape was over, and it had sunk again into one of the many influences to which we owe our English character. His earlier verse, the pamphlets of his riper years, the epics of his age, mark with a singular precision three great stages in his history. His youth shows that much of the gaiety, the poetic ease, the intellectual culture of the Renascence lingered in a Puritan home. Scrivener and 'precisian' as his father was, he was a skilled musician; and the boy inherited his father's skill on lute and organ. . . .

"In spite of the war between playwright and precisian, a Puritan youth in Milton's days could still avow his love of the stage, 'if Jonson's learned sock be on, or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child, warble his native woodnotes wild.' He could gather from the 'masques and antique pageantry' of the court-revel hints for his own *Comus* and *Arcades*. Nor does any shadow of the coming struggle against the Church disturb the young scholar's reverie, as he wanders beneath 'the high embowed roof, with antique pillars massy proof, and storied windows richly dight, casting a dim religious light,' or as he hears 'the pealing organ blow to the full-voiced

choir below, in service high and anthem clear.' His enjoyment of the gaiety of life stands in bright contrast with the gloom and sternness which strife and persecution fostered in the later Puritanism. In spite of what he described as 'a certain reservedness of natural disposition' which shrank from 'festivities and jests, in which I acknowledge my faculty to be very slight,' the young singer could still enjoy the 'jest and youthful jollity' of the world around him, its 'quips and cranks and wanton wiles'; he could look pleasantly on at the village fair, 'where the jocund rebecks sound to many a youth and many a maid, dancing in the chequered shade.'

"There was nothing ascetic in his look, in his slender, vigorous frame, his face full of a delicate yet serious beauty, the rich brown hair which clustered over his brow . . . He drank in an ideal chivalry from Spenser, but his religion and purity disdained the outer pledge on which chivalry built up its fabric of honour. 'Every free and gentle spirit,' said Milton, 'without that oath, ought to be a knight.' It was with this temper that he passed from his London school, St. Paul's, to Christ's College at Cambridge, and it was this temper that he preserved throughout his University career."

But we have already drawn very generously upon Milton in this book. Even before the death of Queen Elizabeth, Papal aggression was already provoking anger in the country.

"Single-handed, unsupported by any of the statesmen or divines about her, the Queen had forced on the warring religions a sort of armed truce. The main principles of the Reformation were accepted, but the zeal of the

ultra-reformers was held at bay. The Bible was left open, private discussion was unrestrained, but the warfare of pulpit against pulpit was silenced by the licensing of preachers. Outer conformity, attendance at the common prayer, was exacted from all; but the changes in ritual, by which the zealots of Geneva gave prominence to the radical features of the religious change which was passing over the country, were resisted. While England was struggling for existence, this balanced attitude of the Crown reflected faithfully enough the balanced attitude of the nation; but with the declaration of war by the Papacy in the Bull of Deposition the movement in favour of a more pronounced Protestantism gathered a new strength. Unhappily the Queen clung obstinately to her system of compromise, weakened and broken as it was. With the religious enthusiasm which was growing up around her she had no sympathy whatever. Her passion was for moderation, her aim was simply civil order; and both order and moderation were threatened by the knot of clerical bigots who gathered under the banner of Presbyterianism. Bigotry was rousing counter-bigotry. Of these bigots of the left Thomas Cartwright was the chief. He had studied at Geneva; he returned with a fanatical faith in Calvinism, and in the system of Church government which Calvin had devised; and as Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge he used to the full the opportunities which his chair gave him of propagating his opinions. No leader of a religious party ever deserved less of after sympathy than Cartwright. He was unquestionably learned and devout, but his disposition was that of a mediæval inquisitor. The relics of the old

ritual, the cross in baptism, the surplice, the giving of a ring in marriage, were to him not merely distasteful, as they were to the Puritans at large, they were idolatrous and the mark of the beast."

Cartwright cut no ice, as the saying goes, with the English people. The spirit of Calvinistic Presbyterianism excluded all toleration of practice or belief.

As Milton, most modern-spirited of Protestants, put it:

"*New Presbyter is but Old Priest writ large.*"

"To the ordinary English Protestant," says J. R. Green, "no innovation in faith or worship was of small account, if it tended in the direction of Rome. The peril was too great to admit of tolerance or moderation. . . .

"We see the Puritan temper already in the Millenary Petition (as it was called), which was presented to James the First on his accession by some eight hundred clergymen, about one-tenth of the whole number in his realm. It asked for no change in the government or organisation of the Church, but for a reform of its courts, the removal of superstitious usages from the Book of Common Prayer, the disuse of lessons from the apocryphal books of Scripture, a more rigorous observance of Sundays, and the provision and training of preaching ministers. Even statesmen who had little sympathy with the religious spirit about them pleaded for the purchase of religious and national union by ecclesiastical reforms. 'Why,' asked Francis Bacon, 'should the civil state be purged and restored by good and wholesome laws made every three years in Parliament assembled, devising rem-

edies as fast as time breedeth mischief, and contrariwise the ecclesiastical state still continue upon the dregs of time, and receive no alteration these forty-five years or more?' A general expectation, in fact, prevailed that, now the Queen's opposition was removed, something would be done. Unhappily her successor proved equally resolute against all changes in Church matters.

"No sovereign could have jarred more utterly against the conception of an English ruler which had grown up under Plantagenet or Tudor than James the First. His big head, his slobbering tongue, his quilted clothes, his rickety legs, stood out in as grotesque a contrast with all that men recalled of Henry or Elizabeth as his rhodomontade, as his want of personal dignity, his buffoonery, his coarseness of speech, his pedantry and cowardice. Underneath this ridiculous exterior, however, lay much natural ability, a scholar with a considerable fund of shrewdness, mother-wit and ready repartee. His reading, especially in theological matters, was extensive; and he was a voluminous author on subjects which ranged from predestination to tobacco. But his shrewdness and learning only left him, in the phrase of Henry the Fourth, 'the wisest fool in Christendom.' He had the temper of a pedant, a pedant's conceit, a pedant's love of theories, and a pedant's inability to bring his theories into any relation with actual facts. All might have gone well had he confined himself to speculations about witchcraft, about predestination, about the noxiousness of smoking.

"Unhappily for England and for his successor, he clung yet more passionately to theories of government which contained within them the seeds of a death-strug-

gle between his people and the Crown. Even before his accession to the English throne, he had formulated his theory of rule in a work on *The True Law of Free Monarchy;* and announced that, 'although a good King will frame his actions to be according to law, yet he is not bound thereto, but of his own will and for example-giving to his subjects.' With the Tudor statesmen who used the phrase, 'an absolute King' or 'an absolute Monarchy' meant a sovereign or rule complete in themselves, and independent of all foreign or Papal interference. James chose to regard the words as implying the monarch's freedom from all control by law, or from responsibility to anything but his own royal will.

"The King's theory was soon, as the Divine Right of Kings, to become a doctrine which bishops preached from the pulpit. Convocation in its book of Canons denounced as a fatal error the assertion that 'all civil power, jurisdiction and authority were first derived from the people and disordered multitude, and either is originally still in them, or else is deduced by their consent naturally from them; and is not God's ordinance originally descending upon Him and depending upon Him.'

"Cowell, a civilian, followed up the discoveries of Convocation by an announcement that 'the King is above the law by his absolute power,' and that 'notwithstanding his oath he may alter and suspend any particular law that seemeth hurtful to the public estate.' The book was suppressed on the remonstrance of the House of Commons, but the party of passive obedience grew fast. A few years before the death of James, the Uni-

versity of Oxford decreed solemnly that 'it was in no case lawful for subjects to make use of force against their princes, or to appear offensively or defensively in the field against them.' 'As it is atheism and blasphemy to dispute what God can do,' said James, in a speech delivered in the Star Chamber, 'so it is presumption and a high contempt in a subject to dispute what a King can do, or to say that a King cannot do this or that.' "

Among the King's most ardent supporters and intellectual associates was John Donne the poet, who began his career as an amorist of the most brilliant type and commemorated it in deathless verse, fell deeply in love, eloped and became a faithful husband, had twelve annual children of whom he buried five, and when his wife died under the strain, devoted himself to ill-health and his poetical gift. The King found Donne's erudition greater than his own, and his belief in Divine Right very sustaining. James persuaded him to take Holy Orders, which he had hitherto declined, and made him Dean of St. Paul's, the first of a long series of distinguished Deans. Whether Donne preferred his Majesty to his Maker is by no means clear. Donne killed himself when in the worst of health by insisting upon making his personal attendance upon his Royal Master and preaching his customary Lenten sermon.

The peculiar temperamental perversion that handed over Donne's worshipful monarch to a series of youthful male "favourites," of which the Duke of Buckingham was the chief, and the attempts to marry the Prince of Wales to a Spanish Catholic Princess, intensified the general uneasiness. There is no need to detail the "roman-

tic" visit of Buckingham and Prince Charles to Madrid. That adventure ended in failure. The return of the Prince "was the signal for a burst of national joy. All London was alight with bonfires, in her joy at the failure of the Spanish match, and of the collapse, humiliating as it was, of the policy which had so long trailed English honour at the chariot-wheels of Spain."

There followed an understanding with France and the marriage of Charles I (who had succeeded to the throne) to Henrietta, the sister of the French King.

"It was suspected, and suspicion was soon to be changed into certainty, that in spite of his pledge to make no religious concessions, Charles had promised on his marriage to relax the penal laws against Catholics, and that a foreign power had again been given the right of intermeddling in the civil affairs of the realm. It was men with Catholic leanings whom Charles seemed disposed to favour. Bishop Laud was recognised as the centre of that varied opposition to Puritanism, whose members were loosely grouped under the name of Arminians; and Laud became the King's adviser in ecclesiastical matters. With Laud at its head the new party grew in boldness as well as numbers. It naturally sought shelter for its religious opinions by exalting the power of the Crown. A court favourite, Montague, ventured to slight the Reformed Churches of the continent in favour of the Church of Rome, and to advocate as the faith of the Church the very doctrines rejected by the Calvinists. The temper of the Commons on religious matters was clear to every observer. 'Whatever mention does break forth of the fears or dangers in religion, and

the increase of Popery,' wrote a member who was noting the proceedings of the House, 'their affections are much stirred.' "

Buckingham was murdered in 1628, amidst regrettable rejoicings on the part of the London mob, Laud became Bishop of London in the same year, and the Puritan emigration which laid the foundation of New England became an organised movement. (The *Mayflower* had sailed from Holland in 1620.)

All through the reign of Charles I, the encroachments of monarchical absolutism and of both Roman and Anglican Catholicism continued, and at every challenge the hostility of the mass of English people to these encroachments was manifest. When, after the failure of a reactionary Army Plot, Charles I, to save his own skin, betrayed his chief supporter, Strafford, the whole country rejoiced.

"Strafford died as he had lived. His friends warned him of the vast multitude gathered before the Tower to witness his fall. 'I know how to look death in the face, and the people too,' he answered proudly. 'I thank God I am no more afraid of death, but as cheerfully put off my doublet at this time as ever I did when I went to bed.' As the axe fell, the silence of the great multitude was broken by a universal shout of joy. The streets blazed with bonfires. The bells clashed out from every steeple. 'Many,' says an observer, 'that came to town to see the execution rode in triumph back, waving their hats, and with all expressions of joy through every town they went, crying "His head is off! His head is off!" ' "

Strafford had prepared an army to support the King in

Ireland. Now that army was headless. "The disbanded soldiers he had raised spread over the country, and stirred the smouldering disaffection into a flame. A conspiracy, organised with wonderful power and secrecy, burst forth in Ulster, where the confiscation of the Settlement had never been forgiven, and spread like wildfire over the centre and west of the island. Dublin was saved by a mere chance. In the open country the work of murder went unchecked. Thousands of English people perished, and rumour doubled and trebled the number. Tales of horror and outrage came day after day over the Irish Channel. Sworn depositions told how husbands were cut to pieces in presence of their wives, their children's brains dashed out before their faces, their daughters brutally violated and driven out naked to perish frozen in the woods.

" 'Some,' says May, 'were burned on set purpose, others drowned for sport or pastime, and if they swam kept from landing with poles, or shot, or murdered in the water; many were buried quick, and some set into the earth breast-high and there left to famish.' The revolt was unlike any earlier rising in its religious character. No longer was it a struggle, as of old, of Celt against Saxon, but of Catholic against Protestant. The Papists within the Pale joined hands in it with the wild kernes outside the Pale. . . ."

So the story runs on. The Civil War was fought to a finish, and Charles being a shameless cheat and liar was finally beheaded for a hitherto unheard-of crime, treason to the people. Then came the Restoration and a phase of uncertain loyalty until fresh Jesuit activities

roused the popular distrust again. There was a real plot, but also there was a bogus plot invented by a scoundrel, Titus Oates. This "Popish Plot," mingling reality and imagination, produced the usual response from the populace. It became manifest that James, Duke of York, the King's brother and successor, was involved in a projected restoration of the papal rule in England.

Never had the French alliance seemed so full of danger to English irreligion. Europe had long been trembling at the ambition of Louis XIV; it was trembling now at his bigotry. He declared war at this moment upon religious freedom by revoking the Edict of Nantes, the measure by which Henry the Fourth after his abandonment of Protestantism secured toleration and the free exercise of their worship for his Protestant subjects. It had been respected by Richelieu even in his victory over the Huguenots, and only lightly tampered with by Mazarin. But from the beginning of his reign Louis had resolved to set aside its provisions, and his revocation of it in 1685 was only the natural close of a progressive system of persecution. The Revocation was followed by outrages more cruel than even the bloodshed of Alva. Dragoons were quartered on Protestant families and given the utmost freedom of outrage, women were flung from their sick-beds into the streets, children were torn from their mothers' arms to be brought up in Catholicism, ministers were sent to the galleys.

In spite of the royal edicts, which forbade emigration to the victims of these horrible atrocities, a hundred thousand Protestants fled over the borders, and Holland,

Switzerland, the Palatinate, were filled with French exiles. Thousands found refuge in England, and their industry founded in the fields east of London the silk trade of Spitalfields. But while the English people beheld these events with horror, James drew from them new hopes. In defiance of the law, he filled fresh regiments with Catholic officers. He met the Parliament with a haughty declaration that whether legal or no his grant of commissions to Catholics must not be questioned, and with a demand for supplies for his new troops. Loyal as was the temper of the Houses, their alarm for the Reformed Religion and their dread of a standing army was yet stronger than their loyalty. The Commons, by a majority of a single vote, deferred the grant of supplies until grievances were redressed, and demanded in their address the recall of the illegal commissions. The Lords took a bolder tone; and the protest of the bishops against any infringement of the Test Act was backed by the eloquence of Halifax. Both Houses were at once prorogued. An ambassador, the Earl of Castlemaine, was sent to implore the Pope's blessing on these proceedings:

"Catholics were admitted into civil and military offices without stint, and four Catholic peers were sworn as members of the Privy Council. The laws which forbade the presence of Catholic priests in the realm, or the open exercise of Catholic worship, were set at nought. A gorgeous chapel was opened in the palace of St. James for the use of the King. Carmelites, Benedictines, Franciscans appeared in their religious garb in the streets of London, and the Jesuits set up a crowded school in the Savoy."

The manifest popular "discontent at these acts would have startled a wiser man into prudence, but James prided himself on an obstinacy which never gave way; and a riot which took place on the opening of a fresh Catholic chapel in the City was followed by the establishment of a camp of thirteen thousand men at Hounslow to overawe the capital.

"James clung to the hope of finding a compliant Parliament, from which he might win a repeal of the Test Act. In face of the dogged opposition of the country the elections had been adjourned; and a renewed Declaration of Indulgence was intended as an appeal to the nation at large. At its close he promised to summon a Parliament in November, and he called on the electors to choose such members as would bring to a successful end the policy he had begun. It was in this character of a royal appeal that he ordered every clergyman to read the declaration during divine service on two successive Sundays. Little time was given for deliberation, but little time was needed. The clergy refused almost to a man to be the instruments of their own humiliation. The Declaration was read in only four of the London churches, and in these the congregation flocked out of church at the first words of it. Nearly all of the country clergy refused to obey the royal orders. The Bishops went with the rest of the clergy.

"A few days before the appointed Sunday Archbishop Sancroft called his suffragans together, and the six who were able to appear at Lambeth signed a temperate protest to the King, in which they declined to publish an illegal Declaration. 'It is a standard of rebellion,' James

exclaimed as the Primate presented the paper; and the resistance of the clergy was no sooner announced to him than he determined to wreak his vengeance on the prelates who had signed the protest. He ordered the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to deprive them of their sees, but in this matter even the Commissioners shrank from obeying him. The Chancellor, Lord Jeffreys, advised a prosecution for libel as an easier mode of punishment; and the bishops, who refused to give bail, were committed on this charge to the Tower. They passed to their prison amidst the shouts of a great multitude, the sentinels knelt for their blessing as they entered its gates, and the soldiers of the garrison drank their healths. So threatening was the temper of the nation that his ministers pressed James to give way. But his obstinacy grew with the danger. 'Indulgence,' he said, 'ruined my father'; and on the 29th of June the bishops appeared as criminals at the bar of the King's Bench. The jury had been packed, the judges were mere tools of the Crown, but judges and jury were alike overawed by the indignation of the people at large. No sooner had the foreman of the jury uttered the words 'not guilty' than a roar of applause burst from the crowd, and horsemen spurred along every road to carry over the country the news of the acquittal."

The last militant act of King James as the skies blackened over him was to bring over drafts from the Catholic army Tyrconnel had raised for him. This produced among other things one of the best marching tunes in the British Army, "Lilliburlero." It was immensely popular. It was sung throughout the country. The tune

is said to have been based upon an old Irish lullaby, but the words seem to have been put together in a pretended Irish brogue by Thomas Lord Wharton, and the air was made into what it still is, the most savagely thunderous and popular of British marching tunes, by no less a composer than Henry Purcell. He published and fathered it as a "New Irish Tune" in 1689 in his *Music's Handmaid.*

There are endless versions of the words. People improvised and altered them as it passed like a wind through the country. The general burthen ran very much after this fashion:

"Ho! brother Teague, do you hear the decree?
Lilliburlero, bullen a-la,
That we are to have a new Deputy,
Lilliburlero, bullen a-la.
Lero lero, lilliburlero, lero, lero, bullen a-la.

Ho! by Saint Tyburn, it is the Talbot;
Lilliburlero, bullen a-la.
And he shall cut the Englishman's throat.
Lilliburlero, bullen a-la.
Lero lero, lilliburlero, lero, lero, bullen a-la.

"Though by my soul the English do prate,
The law's on their side and Christ knows what.

"But if dispensation shall come from the Pope,
We'll hang Magna Carta and them in a rope. . . .

"All in France have taken a swear
That they will have no Protestant heir. . . .

(This easily became "No Protestants there.")

"There was an old prophecy found in a bog
That we shall be ruled by an ass and a dog."

("Dog" was Wharton's word, but the popular voice speedily changed it to "hog.")

"And now is this prophecy coming to pass,
(Overwhelming Crescendo.)
For Talbot's the hog and James is the ass."

Fantastically bitter doggerel, but it released the accumulating resentment of the country at the threatened return of Roman Catholic domination.

Thereafter came the "Glorious Revolution," which ultimately established the Protestant succession in England, confirmed the exclusion of Roman Catholics from the universities and public office, and relaxed the suspicions of the general public. The danger was felt to be over. The habitual torpor of the English mind in the face of theology supervened.

So far I have been following Green's *Short History of the English People*. But now I have to resort to other authorities. The name of Lord George Gordon and the story of the "No Popery" riots of 1780 came back to me, and I searched Green in vain. I turned up my copy of *Barnaby Rudge*. Dickens caricatures the whole affair. To him they are shameful riots, "begotten of intolerance and persecution." "However imperfectly," he writes, "those disturbances are set forth in the following pages, they are impartially painted by one who has no sympa-

thy with the Romish Church, though he acknowledges, as most men do, some esteemed friends among the followers of its creed."

Crabbe saw these riots which J. R. Green ignores and describes them in his Journal to his beloved "Mira," that is to say Sally Elmy, who later on became his wife. The mob, he says, was a mixture of very various elements. "Quiet and decent" he describes it at Westminster, but the storming of the keeper's house at the Old Bailey and the jail delivery of convicted felons evidently frightened him. They released all the debtors also, and Newgate was an open house for all to come and go. A formidable contingent of criminals from the slums started burning and looting. "About ten or twelve of the mob getting to the top of the debtors' prison, whilst it was burning, to halloo, they appeared rolled in black smoke mixed with sudden bursts of fire—like Milton's infernals, who were as familiar with flame as with each other. On comparing notes with my neighbours, I find I saw but a small part of the mischief. They say Lord Mansfield's house is now in flames."

But J. R. Green has not a word to say about these troubles. Like Dickens, he was saturated with the amiable liberalism of the Gladstonian phase in English thought. The leopard had changed its spots and everything was different.

Manifestly these excellent liberals thought that Popery had ceased to be a danger to the liberties of the English people. I suggest that in this matter the instincts of that eighteenth-century London crowd were sounder than his uncritical toleration.

The Oxford Counter Revolution is best dealt with by James Anthony Froude, in a study under that title, and in his *Nemesis of Faith*. His *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada* is also, by the by, a frank and vivid piece of history from the Protestant point of view. The reader will find only a hostile appreciation of him in Mr. Garvin's lamentable *Encyclopaedia Britannica* manifestly written by a Roman Catholic who remains characteristically and discreetly anonymous. A timely appreciation by A. L. Rowse in the *New Statesman* of March 20th, 1943, sweeps away these insinuations:

"Of all the great Victorians Froude, it seems to me, is the writer least estimated at his proper worth and most worth while reviving. There is so much in him that should appeal to our age; in many ways he had more affinities with the twentieth century than with the nineteenth: the strain of scepticism in him for one thing, the historian's relativism that made him see all religions as myths and men's philosophies as rationalisations of their interests and desires. . . .

"And what a magnificent writer; what a stylist! So infinitely better than Carlyle, to whom he deferred, like the rest of the Victorians, as a great man and a major prophet. And I am not so sure that in addition to writing better, he had not more to offer in what he said, at any rate more sense, than Carlyle had. Give me Froude every time: a better historian, a better writer, a more sceptical, a more subtle, intelligence. . . .

"He was read. He held people's attention. He had ad-

mirers, if few defenders and no followers. He was a lonely figure, at the same time as he was much sought after, and a distinguished person in society. . . .

". . . his troubles began with his first books, and persisted to the last. *The Nemesis of Faith* is chiefly known for having been publicly burnt by the Sub-Rector of his college at Oxford when Froude was a young Fellow. It is deserving of attention on more serious grounds and for its own sake. Its subject is the ferment of thought about the foundations of faith stirred up by the Oxford Movement, the dilemma of belief which was such a critical issue to sensitive minds in the mid-nineteenth century and especially to those brought up in a clerical environment like Froude, whose livelihood and career were involved in it."

I have been watching the current effort to subjugate this easygoing, profoundly sceptical country to the Roman Catholic Church with a lively interest. The process has been systematic and impudent to the point of incredibility. I only realise how much has been attempted now that it is past its climax. In the same way one did not realise the gravity of the Blitzkrieg until the climax was past. There has been a Catholic Blitzkrieg upon Britain during the immense stresses of the war. The one remaining vestige of Protestant England has been the Protestant Succession. By releasing the Crown from that Protestant oath—and that might easily have been arranged in the name of "freedom of worship"—that last obstacle would have been removed.

For four war years Great Britain officially has been

behaving like a Catholic country determined to emerge from a deplorable past. The Rev. So-and-So, S.J., and the Very Venerable So-and-So, S.J., have had a disproportionately large share of our broadcasting time. Non-Christian voices have been relatively inaudible, although the great majority of peoples in the British Empire do not profess to be Christians.

The teaching of the Roman Catholic Church puts the Faith before any other social or political consideration, and the Roman Catholics in any country and under any form of government constitute an essentially alien body. The over-confident liberalism of the early nineteenth century enfranchised this body of outlanders, believing it would in some mysterious manner play the game of mutual toleration which seemed so natural to the essentially sceptical and secular liberal mentality. Nothing of the sort ensued. Steadily, persistently, the Catholic Church has worked for the destruction of that very liberalism which restored it to political influence. Persecuting relentlessly where it was in the ascendant, and canting about individual liberty of conscience wherever it was faced by a modern organisation of society, this mental cancer has spread itself back to destroy the health and hope of our modern world.

There is something in this Roman Catholic business that sends me back to Coleridge's *Christabel*. The reader may remember how a mysterious maiden, Geraldine, came to Christabel and sought her protection, and how Christabel sheltered her in spite of a series of creepy intimations that all was not right with the visitant.

"*And Geraldine . . .*
Softly gathering up her train,
That o'er her right arm fell again;
And folded her arms across her chest,
And couched her head upon her breast;
And looked askance at Christabel—
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!

"*A snake's dull eye blinks dull and shy;*
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,
And with something of malice, and more of dread,
At Christabel she looked askance!—
One moment—and the sight was fled!
But Christabel in dizzy trance
Stumbling on the unsteady ground . . ."

"*Again she saw that bosom old,*
Again she felt that bosom cold . . ."

As this present world war goes on, and even if there is some sort of temporary half peace before it degenerates into a tangle of minor wars, it will become plainer and plainer that it is no longer a geographically determined warfare of governments, nations and peoples, but the world-wide struggle of our species to release itself from the strangling octopus of Catholic Christianity. Everywhere the Church extends its tentacles and fights to prolong the Martyrdom of Man. Through St. Cyr and Vichyism it assails the fine liberal tradition of France; it dominates the policy of the British War Office and

Foreign Office, and through these the B.B.C. and the press; by a disciplined Catholic vote, a casting vote in endless elections and a sustained organisation of menace and boycott, it silences the frank discussion of its influence in America. It works counter both to the old nationalisms that broke away from it at the Reformation and to the emergence of a scientifically guided world commonweal from the initial experiment of Russian communism. Like an octupus it has no creative impulse but only an instinct to survive. In Ireland, Spain, Italy, reactionary France, North and South America, Japan, and wherever it can stretch a tentacle, it seeks allies in every element that is socially base, that will help it to continue its struggle against the awakening liberalism of the "United Democracies," as it is our hopeful custom to call them.

Here are extracts from an article by Katharine Hayden Salter, in the (American) *Churchman* of January 15th, 1943.

"The October 5th (1942) issue of a Toledo newspaper carried the following statement as a news item:

" 'Monsignor Sheen, associate professor of philosophy in Catholic University, Washington, D. C., and director of the Catholic Hour radio programme, spoke on *The Crisis of Christendom,* in a meeting sponsored by the Mary Manse Alumnæ Association. He said:

" '*We are living at the end of an era, ushered in by the Protestant Revolt 400 years ago—a revolt that denied authority, so that as a result we have been living without God, we have tossed Him out of His own world.*' Monsignor Sheen called the war a judgment on the way man

has lived, and said that victory will be ours only on condition that we repent."

"Simon and Schuster have recently brought out a book, *The Catholic Pattern,* by Thomas Woodlock. It is built around exactly the same thesis—that the cause of this war is the Reformation, the 'Revolt,' the 'metaphysical heresy' of having left the Catholic Church. It is an assault on the entire Protestant world; and it insists that the Declaration of Independence itself (written by Thomas Jefferson, a deist and 'heretic' if ever there was one, so far as Catholic dogma is concerned) was engendered by the Catholic Pattern. . . .

"In the February 11th, 1928, issue of *America,* an important Jesuit publication, Charles J. Mullaly, S.J., states the case fully. Let me quote a bit from it. Father Mullaly describes in detail the workings of a Catholic boycott, thought up by his fellow Jesuits of an earlier day and carried through, in 1913, in Washington, D. C., when a newspaper tried to investigate conditions in a Catholic home for wayward girls. He describes the total boycott, dutifully carried through by the laity and clergy, without a hitch—save one object of Catholic scorn—'a weak-kneed Catholic advertiser who declared that he did not believe in mixing business and religion!' Then Father Mullaly proudly says: 'The forty per cent loss of circulation now meant also a forty per cent fall in the rates for advertising.' . . . The 'slogan was sounding through Washington, "Do not buy any paper that insults the Catholic religion, and do not buy from any store that advertises in such a paper." The lesson was a lasting one.' . . .

" 'History often repeats itself. Since some secular magazines and newspapers now believe, as this Washington editor believed in 1913, *that it pays to insult the Catholic Church and to foster religious controversy, why cannot Catholics in every city let the history of this counter-attack repeat itself for them? They can follow the example of the Catholics in Washington, in 1913*. . . .

" 'The lessons learned in Washington in 1913 may briefly be summed up as follows:

" '1. Do not attack a magazine or newspaper through its editorial departments but act through its business office.

" '2. When a magazine or newspaper is attacking your religion, write to the business manager and inform him that you will not buy the offending periodical again, and mean it. . . .

" 'If Catholics follow the example of the Catholics in Washington in 1913, we shall soon decisively answer the question which the editors of some secular periodicals are now asking themselves: *Does it pay to insult Catholics?*' "

That is the language and technique of this last Catholic offensive. Are decent Protestants to emulate this foul fighting, are we to demand of our grocer and bookseller whether he is a Catholic and boycott him if he is, or would it not be better to restore the alien status of the whole organisation? Plainly the moral for us to-day is the moral of Chaucer's sailor six long centuries ago. "Invite no more monks to your house or inn."

To propitiate the Roman Catholic organisation with political office or power is like establishing friendly relations with an area sneak by handing him the family silver.

XIX

SHINTO CATHOLICISM

Pope Pius XII, the open enemy of everything creative and reconstructive in the world, was first educated in the Gregorian University and Roman Seminary, figured professorially in the Academy of Noble Ecclesiastics, was Archbishop of Sardes, 1917, when he tried to persuade the Kaiser to make a moderate peace, developed his political ideas as Papal Nuncio in Bavaria and Germany, and so forth. Having tied himself irrevocably to the Axis, he had to accept, and he accepted all too readily, the assimilation for mutual assistance of Shintoism and Catholicism.

How far that assimilation has gone let this passage from Professor Karl Adam's *The Spirit of Catholicism* bear witness.

"We Catholics," says this authoritative exponent of Roman Catholic orthodoxy, "acknowledge readily, without any shame, nay with pride, that Catholicism cannot be identified simply and wholly with primitive Christianity, nor even with the Gospel of Christ, in the same way that the great oak cannot be identified with the tiny acorn. There is no mechanical identity, but an organic identity. And we go further and say that thousands of years hence Catholicism will probably be

even richer, more luxuriant, more manifold in dogma, morals, law and worship, than the Catholicism of the present day. A religious historian of the fifth millennium A.D. will without difficulty discover in Catholicism conceptions and forms and practices which will derive from India, China and Japan, and he will have to recognise a far more obvious 'complex of opposites.' It is quite true, Catholicism *is* a union of contraries. But 'contraries are not contradictions' . . . The Gospel of Christ would have been no living gospel, and the seed which He scattered no living seed, if it had remained ever the tiny seed of A.D. 33, and not struck root, and had not assimilated foreign matter, and had not by the help of this foreign matter grown up into a tree, so that the birds of the air dwell in its branches."

It is interesting to consider these "conceptions, forms and practices" that the Roman Catholic Church, as Professor Karl Adam expounds it, is now incorporating.

Mr. A. Morgan Young has recently published an admirable summary of them (*The Rise of a Pagan State, 1939*). He gives his sources for whatever statements he makes, so that the interested reader can get his book and verify and expand what is stated here.

The basis of Shinto is the Kojiki, a compilation of the eighth century A.D. It is readable in its entirety only by scholars, its language being far more remote from the Japanese of to-day than eighth-century Anglo-Saxon would be from current English. For various reasons only portions of it have been modernised for general use. It begins with a sort of storm of gods neither made nor begotten but passing away. From this tumult emerge

two highly sexual figures, Izanagi and Izanami, who might be described in Hollywood language as male and female "sex appeal." They respond to each other with tremendous vigour, begetting gods and islands and at last a Fire God who burns up his mother Izanami. But by this time Izanagi is so set on procreation that everything about him procreates; he throws off his clothes and they become sea gods and land gods. Finally he produces the Sun Goddess from his left eye, the Moon God from his right eye and the headlong Susa-no-o by blowing his nose. After which he seems to have retired and the Sun Goddess and Susa-no-o occupy the stage.

After various remarkable adventures, no doubt of the greatest spiritual significance and full of lessons for the true believer, Susa-no-o meets a formidable damsel-devouring dragon with eight heads and other alarming accessories, intoxicates the beast with saki, kills it and cuts it up. But one of the tails resists and breaks his sword, because a better sword is hidden in it. This he presents to his sister the Sun Goddess. It lies to-day, thickly swathed in brocade, in the Family Shrine of the Imperial House in Tokyo. It is one of the Three Sacred Treasures, the sword, the mirror and the jewel, which the Sun Goddess transmitted to the divine Emperors, the living Gods of Japan.

To the Catholic mind, accustomed to a widely different system of myths and absurdities, this reads like monstrous nonsense. It is wiser not to say that in Japan. For example, Dr. Inoue Tetsujiro, a loyal but liberal-minded Shintoist, ventured to doubt the authenticity of the Three Sacred Treasures. He was denounced, his

publisher penalised, and he was expelled from the Imperial University. Later on, while attending the memorial service of a friend, he was set upon by a gang of pious ruffians and beaten so that one eye was destroyed. No one was punished for this outrage, which indeed is only one sample among many of the spirit of renascent Shintoism. It is quite good form to jump at a man who uses a phrase or makes a gesture that seems lacking in piety, and stab him. It is like those fierce old colonels in England who assault people for not standing stiff to "God Save the King." It is the very spirit of the Trinitarians at Nicæa.

The great assimilation prophesied by Professor Karl Adam has already begun. The crude early Christians, still in the "acorn" phase, preferred martyrdom to burning a pinch of incense to the Roman God-Emperors, but the Roman Catholic Church of to-day has already established friendly relations with the Shinto faith, and the Japanese Catholic bows in the Shinto temples in acquiescence to the local supremacy of the Emperor-Divinity over the Vatican.

There will be no Roman Catholic Church at all in the fifth millennium A.D., or it would be amusing to speculate how the successors of Professor Karl Adam, long before then, would have plaited into the Trinity that God of Male Sex Appeal from whose left eye sprang the Sun Goddess, while he blew Susa-no-o, the dragon-slaying Susa-no-o, from his nose.

XX

ROMAN CATHOLICISM IN AMERICA

SUCH IS CATHOLICISM as it is understood by Pope Pacelli and Japan. But the spirit of Roman Catholicism as one finds it in America is very different from that. Roman Catholics in America are influential because of their solid vote at elections, but for all that the American Roman Catholic does not like to hear—and to the best of his ability will not hear—of the Vatican-Japanese alliance. If he is one of the well-trained faithful he just pretends it isn't there. And we may counterbalance some of what has gone before by a word or so from a much saner type of Roman Catholic, Mr. Joseph Dinneen, who recently wrote, and wrote very ably, an account of this Axis pontiff from the standpoint of an American journalist.

His frontispiece is a portrait of Pope Pacelli, under which we read these singular words: "Bishop of Rome, Patriarch of the West, Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church." I do not know how far Mr. Dinneen endorses this inscription. But in his Preface he tells very disarmingly of how it struck him when he learnt that Pius X was an inveterate cigar smoker and he realised that "Popes are human." He says:

"The doctrine of infallibility always puzzles my

Protestant friends. The answer to the question on this in the Catholic catechism is: 'The Church teaches infallibly when it speaks through the Pope and the bishops, united in general council, or through the Pope alone when he proclaims to the faithful a doctrine of faith or morals.' Like a good many other Catholics, I have often been told by smug friends that my intellect is necessarily limited and bounded by my obedience to the Pope, and I shrug my shoulders and turn away, because I realise no amount of argument can convince them that I can be happy in my religion, believe in its tenets and teachings implicitly, and still think for myself in matters temporal; that the foreign policy of the Secretary of State at the Vatican, for instance, is a temporal matter, and I can disagree with the position of the Church in Spain, and still be a good Catholic and receive the sacraments."

That is good, plain American Catholicism. And there is not a word of truth in it. It is out of date. It is almost pre-Reformation stuff. It should be distinguished as Old Catholicism. It is not the Catholicism of an ever more desperately aggressive Papacy. . . .

For many men who were once good Catholics, the doctrine of infallibility was a turning-point.

On matters of Church history Dr. G. G. Coulton is a patient, unrelenting, trustworthy guide, and no one interested in the fatal concentration of power in the hands of the Pope since 1870 should fail to read him. In his book, *Papal Infallibility* (1932), he shows how such historical authorities as Lord Acton for example were driven into open opposition by that dogma. Acton was

himself a Catholic, the one outstanding historian the Church can claim in modern times, yet he wrote of this doctrine with sorrowful prophetic insight: "Erected originally as an impregnable fortress against advancing liberalism, it seems more likely now to prove an ineluctable death-trap. For the moment, indeed, it might have seemed to justify the Roman Church completely in all her actions; but now, more and more clearly, we see that she needs to summon up all the memories of her past prestige, and all the resources of her elaborate bureaucracy, and all her disciplinary severity, in order to put a colourable face upon this doctrine, so strange both from the historical and from the philosophical point of view."

Here is a more emphatic statement from the same source. Lord Acton is writing to the Catholic historian Lady Blennerhasset:

"The accomplices of the Old Man of the Mountains (the classic assassins of history) picked off individual victims, but the Papacy contrived murder and massacre on the largest and also on the most cruel and inhuman scale. They were not only wholesale assassins, but they also made the principle of assassination a law of the Christian Church and a condition of salvation" (*Selections from the Correspondence of the First Lord Acton*, 1917, Vol. i, p. 55).

From 1820 to 1860 at least 300,000 unarmed men, women and even children died in massacres, on the scaffold, or in pestilential jails for claiming what we now consider human rights.

"The more Catholic the country, indeed, the more

savage were the torture and bloodshed. The Kingdom of the Sicilies (Italy and Sicily) witnessed the longest and vilest reaction. General Coletta claims that there were 200,000 victims from 1790 to 1830, and his Neapolitan successor claims 250,000 in the next thirty years; and as late as 1860 the brutality of the oppression shocked all Europe. These figures are uncertain, since it is very difficult to compile them, and in the case of Italy they include a percentage of armed rebels, but after a severe enquiry I find that at least 300,000 men and women and children perished in Italy, Spain and Portugal. In the Pope's own kingdom, with a population of about 3,000,000, many thousands died by execution, in massacres, or in jails of an incredibly cruel character. The savagery of the clerical-royalists and the foul character of most of the monarchs are described in the *Cambridge Modern History* and all authoritative manuals. . . .

"One other point must be made. The social order which was protected by this brutality was as inefficient as it was unjust, and it was at its worst in the Pope's own States. On this all authorities are agreed. Lady Blennerhasset approvingly quotes in the *Cambridge Modern History* (x, 164) the reflection of Father Lamennais, on visiting Rome, that it was 'the most hideous sewer that ever offended the eye of man'." (*A History of the Popes*, by Joseph McCabe. Watts, London, 1939.)

Dinneen tells a delightful anecdote of the American Cardinal Gibbons returning from the election of Pius X. He was asked—manifestly by an American—what he thought of papal infallibility. He reflected. "Well," he said, with a twinkle, "he called me *Jibbons*."

Very plainly American Catholicism is bound to inflict some uncomfortable gymnastics on our Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Pontiff. We godless people carry on our intellectual warfare for converts and subsidies against the Catholicism of Dinneen, but I, for one, doubt very greatly whether in his heart Dinneen's distrust of Pius XII varies very widely from mine.

Now in the face of the military alliance and dependence of the United Nations upon the magnificent morale of the Russian and Chinese peoples, we have this Axis Pope clamouring for a bitter conflict against something "Unchristian" called "Bolshevisation," which will destroy every decent thing in existence, superiors and inferiors, the family—the Catholics are always very great on the family—and dividends.

XXI

THE UNITED CHRISTIAN FRONT

BEFORE ME AS I WRITE is a very interesting document. It opens up the grave question for all who profess themselves Christians, to consider exactly what, in the face of that document, they mean by that profession. It was published in 1938, and it is headed *United Christian Front.* The chairman of this *United Christian Front* is that Captain Archibald Ramsay who, with Mosley, was interned on the outbreak of the war. His Vice-Chairman and Treasurer was the late Sir Henry Lunn, a sound Tory, who, like Sir Samuel Hoare, believed that the adventurer Franco was "a Christian gentleman."

Another member of this *United Christian Front* was —or is, for I do not know how far it still exists as an active body—that steadfast defender of his investments against the quite imaginary excessive proliferation of the non-investing classes, Dean Inge. I dealt with his peculiarities in a little Penguin book, *The Commonsense of War and Peace*, and Inge has never replied to my challenge. But here is Sir Henry Lunn defending the Dean against the Bishop of Chelmsford for quoting him as saying: "one-quarter of the priests and nuns in Spain have been murdered, some of them after horrid torture." The Bishop, it seems, had written that this was

not so, and had quoted the Vatican *Osservatore Romano*, which could hardly be regarded as an anti-Catholic publication, for claiming only 6,000, out of Dean Inge's quarter of 106,743. But that 6,000, says Sir Henry, refers only to *secular* priests, implying rather than asserting that the Dean was telling the awful truth. Poor Sir Henry wasted his subtleties. Back comes the Dean with this:

"The Bishop of Chelmsford misquotes me as saying that one-quarter of the nuns in Spain have been murdered. I said nothing of the kind. Many have been killed; but the Bishop's protégés were more often content to strip them naked and violate them.

"It is really rather horrible to find a Bishop championing men who, acting on instructions from Moscow to exterminate the middle class, have slaughtered, at a low estimate, 200,000 helpless and harmless people, and whose avowed object is to extirpate the Christian faith in the country of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross.

"There is abundance of well-documented evidence for those—a minority, I fear—who wish to know the truth."

No documented evidence was adduced, because no documentary evidence *can* be adduced.

I will not pillory the odd collection of names that rallied about Captain Archibald Ramsay in 1938, for some of them may have come to see the error of their ways since that year. The point to note is the intense fear of Moscow and the frantic disposition to get together with anyone professing to be pro-Christian, even with Franco and his Moslem blackamoors, against this

dreaded new thing in the world. Ramsay, Mosley, Mussolini, Dean Inge, the King of Italy, de Gaulle, Pétain (not the gallant French aviator but the old man of Vichy), and at the apex of the pyramid this Shinto Catholic Pope, Pius XII! What a motley crew it is! United only in one thing, and that is fear and hatred of a sane scientific equalitarian order in the world. How far are we people of the new order going to let such people waste the new-born hope of mankind?

The latest drive to rally "Believers" is an amalgamation of two organisations. Its sole objective, so far as I can find an understandable objective, is to drive every honest teacher of history or science out of our schools. Then our people's minds can be bunged up with mud thoroughly and finally. The first and most formidable is a Roman Catholic organisation called *The Sword of the Spirit*. The second is called *Religion and Life*, and it seems to be largely under the sway of Mr. T. S. Eliot. Roman Catholicism preserves a strong tradition of cannibalism, and I can give a good guess who will live longest on this conjoint raft. It will be amusing to watch its gyrations.

The programme is extremely vague about the relations of the Primate of all England and the Primate of England and Cardinal Hinsley and the Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council, to the raft and each other. Out of consideration for His Holiness, there is no arrangement for beating off sharks and the Japanese, who are also, as we have seen, deeply religious people. What seems to me a serious practical oversight is that there is no provision against poaching. You know these

gentlemen *will* poach. There will be suspicions and denunciations.

I can imagine the scene: the whispering silence of these holy men and then a sudden outcry. "Here! whose orphan are you stealing? He comes under *my* grant!" Confusion on the raft and a splash. Commotion among the sharks.

Unanimity is restored only by the appearance of a drifting biological experimental station chock-full of dangerous books about reality and truth. If it hits against the raft, it may send the whole crazy accumulation to the bottom. "All hands to the sweeps!" For a time after this "Crisis for Christianity" the United Christian Front is restored.

I am deriding organised High Church and Catholic Christianity, and I would like to make it plain that in doing so I am not disregarding what I might call the necessity of many minds, perhaps most young minds, feel for something one can express by such phrases as "the Fatherhood of God" and "the kingdom of heaven within us." That is the need the Roman Catholic Church trades upon and betrays.

XXII

THE PRETENSIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF POPE PIUS XII

To RETURN to that typical Pope, Pope Pius XII. It is necessary to insist upon his profound ignorance and mental inferiority. Most of us are still living in the old traditions of society, we honour and obey those who are put in authority over us, and it shocks us profoundly to hear that kings and ministers and particularly the Roman Catholic hierarchy are necessarily much more ignorant than a great and increasing multitude of quite common men. But let us consider the peculiar limitations to which these priests are subjected. They have been set aside from the common sanity of mankind from their youth up.

In the atmosphere in which Pius XII was educated, what chance had he to acquire even the most general ideas about modern biology or modern thought? Life is too short for knowledge anyhow, but consider how much of his brief candle has guttered to waste.

Deduct, for example, from his natural allowance of years and days the time consumed by the services of the Church. Every day there is a round of ceremonies he must perform. How many hours they consume I do not know, but they must mean a considerable moiety, and,

apart from that, there are the priestly duties of the confessional, the arrangements of fasts and festivals. They do not leave him much time for extraneous reading. A common British or American out-of-work living on the dole and reading the abundant literature of an ordinary public library, can, if he has the curiosity, acquire a knowledge of modern biology and modern thought and modern ways of life, incomparably greater than the equipment of any Pope who has ever lived. The out-of-work has the advantage of a considerable and growing mass of digested biological thought and fact upon which scientific enquirers have spent a succession of lifetimes —which he can read without restriction. Even if the Pope had been free to read modern scientific literature in such scraps of time as were available for that purpose, he would still be a relatively ignorant man. But a Catholic priest is not free to read what he likes. His reading and thinking are elaborately controlled and rationed. The Church is so essentially out of harmony with reality and the truth of things, and is so aware of it, that it has had to train its priests from the outset to shut their eyes, to close their ears.

Watch a priest in a public conveyance. He is fighting against disturbing suggestions. He must not look at women lest he think of sex. He must not look about him, for reality, that is to say the devil, waits to seduce him on every hand. You see him muttering his protective incantations, avoiding your eye. He is suppressing "sinful" thoughts.

That type is the binding material of the Church. The appeal of sex is as natural to a young male as eating. Its

suppression is a defiance of everything for which a healthy male exists. So that in the priestly mind we deal with something frustrated and secretly resentful, something sexually as well as intellectually malignant. And this applies, through all the glamour of his vestments, incense and so forth, to the Pope, as to any other member of the hierarchy. We are dealing with ideas left over from the Dark Ages, in the brains of a being at once puerile, perverted and malignant. Pius XII, when we strip him down to reality, showed himself as unreal and ignorant as Hitler. Possibly more so. Both have been incoherent and headlong men, whom chance has made figure-heads for the undisciplined foolishness of this dying age. The mere fact that a man by accident and misdirection can trail a vast trace of bloodshed and bitter suffering about the world does not make him any the greater or wiser. Before mankind gets rid of it, the Papacy may be drowning our hopes for the coming generation in a welter of blood—in an attempt to achieve a final world-wide St. Bartholomew's Eve—and it will not add an inch to his stature nor alter the fact that the Pope, any Pope, is necessarily an ill-educated and foolish obstacle, a nucleus of base resistance, heir to the tradition of Roman Catholicism in its last stage of poisonous decay, in the way to a better order in the world.

XXIII

WHY DO WE NOT BOMB ROME?

This chapter was written while World War II was still being fought. For the sake of its historical value it is being left in this new edition as originally written by the author. [The Publishers]

I CUT THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH from *The Times* of October 27th, 1942. "The air raids on Italy have created the greatest satisfaction in Malta, which has suffered so much at Axis hands. At least the Italians now realise what being bombed means and the nature of the suffering they have so callously inflicted on little Malta since June 12th, 1940, when they showered their first bombs on what was then an almost defenceless island.

"As that bombing was intensified, especially since the Italians asked Germany's help in their vain attempt to reduce Malta, the people's reaction became violent and expressed itself in two words 'Bomb Rome,' which were written prominently on walls in every locality."

On June 1st, 1942, the enemy bombed Canterbury and as near as possible got the Archbishop of Canterbury. But what is a mere Protestant Archbishop against His Holiness the Pope?

In March 1943 Rome was still unbombed.

Now consider the following facts:

We are at war with the Kingdom of Italy[1], which made a particularly cruel and stupid attack upon our allies Greece and France; which is the homeland of Fascism; and whose "Duce" Mussolini begged particularly for the privilege of assisting in the bombing of London.

There are also Italian troops fighting against our allies the Russians. A thorough bombing (*à la* Berlin) of the Italian capital seems not simply desirable but necessary. At present a common persuasion that Rome will be let off lightly by our bombers is leading to a great congestion of the worst elements of the Fascist order in and around Rome.

Not only is Rome the source and centre of Fascism, but it has been the seat of a Pope, who, as we shall show, has been an open ally of the Nazi-Fascist-Shinto Axis since his enthronement. He has never raised his voice against that Axis, he has never denounced the abominable aggressions, murder and cruelties they have inflicted upon mankind, and the pleas he is now making for peace and forgiveness are manifestly designed to assist the escape of these criminals, so that they may presently launch a fresh assault upon all that is decent in humanity. The Papacy is admittedly in communication with the Japanese, and maintains in the Vatican an active Japanese observation post.

No other capital has been spared the brunt of this war.

Why do we not bomb Rome? Why do we allow these open and declared antagonists of democratic freedom to entertain their Shinto allies and organise a pseudo-Cath-

[1] This was written just before the fall of Mussolini and the surrender of Italy.

olic destruction of democratic freedom? Why do we—after all the surprises and treacheries of this war—allow this open preparation of an internal attack upon the rehabilitation of Europe? The answer lies in the deliberate blindness of our Foreign Office and opens up a very serious indictment of the mischievous social disintegration inherent in contemporary Roman Catholic activities.

APPENDIX

(The following interview with Mr. H. G. Wells by Mr. John Rowland, editor of the London 'Literary Guide,' was published in the March, 1944, number of that magazine.)

IT WAS ALMOST FOUR YEARS since I sat in the library of Mr. H. G. Wells's house, overlooking the green expanse of Regent's Park. Those four years had been very eventful, both personally and nationally, for most of us.

I recalled Mr. Wells's most recent contribution to the better understanding of present-day tendencies—the Penguin Book called *Crux Ansata,* with its forthright attack on the Roman Catholic Church—and so I asked him: "Do you regard the Roman Catholic Church as a definite menace to human freedom?"

There was no mistaking the seriousness of his reply. "I think," he said slowly, "that it stands for everything most hostile to the mental emancipation and stimulation of mankind. It is the completest, most highly organized system of prejudices and antagonisms in existence. Everywhere in the world there are ignorance and prejudice, but the greatest complex of these, with the most extensive prestige and the most intimate entanglement with traditional institutions, is the Roman Catholic Church. It presents many faces towards the world, but everywhere it is systematic in its fight against freedom."

He went on to discuss *Crux Ansata* and the vast indigna-

tion against it which had been poured forth by the organs of the Roman Catholic Press. "Do you think," I asked, "that these protests are to be taken quite seriously? Can such indignation be really worth its face value?"

Mr. Wells smiled characteristically as he answered: "That is not at all an easy question. I myself think that there is a deep undertow of scepticism in the Roman Catholic world. But most people are loth to change the atmosphere of their upbringing. I have known one or two priests fairly well, and they have made it plain to me that to leave the Church means such a rupture of old habits, ties, and associations that for most temperaments it is as impossible as jumping off a liner in mid-Atlantic. There is no such trouble made for a Protestant who chooses to go Catholic. The Roman Catholics know how to organize the maximum of social pressure and distress for anyone who has doubts. Up to a certain point they will tolerate doubt so long as outward conformity is maintained. Heresy-hunting and the Inquisition are possible only where the Church is strong; where it is weak it may be very complaisant for the time being."

"I believe," I added, "that you have had some interesting exchanges on this topic of the war-time and post-war position of the Church with the editors of various Catholic journals."

"And," he said with some emphasis, "they have been remarkably illuminating on the quality of Roman Catholic discussion when it is facing a sceptical Protestant community. One point of great interest is the way in which they dodge the plain admission that a Roman Catholic has no mental freedom, and imply that he is in no way prevented from reading any modern philosophical literature. They affect a humorous attitude. I am 'ignorant' and so on. There is, they declare, an *Index* of forbidden books, but mostly

these are books by heretical Catholics, and it is quite a delusion that any other books are forbidden to the Faithful. Quite a delusion," he repeated with a wry smile. "This will be brazened out by most of them. But one eminent Catholic teacher, more honest than his fellows, in an outburst of frankness wrote to say this was a mere controversial trick." Mr. Wells picked up a bulky batch of documents and selected one of them. "Here is the letter," he said, and read:—

"*May I say that I do not agree with Bedoyere in his contention that you were frightfully ignorant in supposing that your book would be forbidden to Catholics? Though it is quite true that your book may never be put on the Index, it seems to me to be the type of book that is ipso jure forbidden to Catholics in C. 1399, 2, 3, 4, and 6 of our Codex of Canon Law. It is open to Catholics to argue that blinkers are excellent things; but I find it hard to see how we can honestly deny your contention that we are in blinkers.*"

"The whole Liberal, Rational, and Socialist literature of the world," he said, "does not, and could not, by reason of its abundance, figure on the *Index*, but—you see—every practicing Catholic must take the advice of his confessor upon his reading matter." Mr. Wells paused, and leaned forward in his chair, a finger pointing the emphasis. "Besides, my dear Rowland, consider Southern Ireland, that poor emasculated neutral, and the sort of futile role that it must play in the post-war world. Directly the priest gets well into the saddle he starts a censorship and pulls down the blind."

"I think," I remarked, "that it was Michael de la Bedoyere, the editor of the *Catholic Herald*, who accused you of running away from his invincible arguments. What was the truth of that matter?"

"Trying to conduct a square discussion with a Roman Catholic," he said, "is like trying to use a live eel as a walking

stick. See here"—he picked up a document—"where the worthy Bedoyere announces: '*Crux Ansata* feeding Nazi propaganda. H. G. Wells, by a timely altering of his own conditions, has evaded the invitation of the editor of the *Catholic Herald* for an early meeting to discuss the mis-statements in *Crux Ansata*.' Yes, and he prints my letter to him declining the proposed encounter. But where is the letter to which mine was a reply, and which made me abandon that seductive lunch? You see, with true Roman Catholic dexterity, he has taken the obvious expedient and omitted it."

Mr. Wells handed me a bulky bundle of correspondence, and invited me to glance through it, extracting any items which I thought would be relevant and of interest. All that I can usefully do here is to remark that Mr. de la Bedoyere, after saying that he would give Mr. Wells a marked copy of *Crux Ansata*, with all those points regarded as errors plainly indicated, suddenly stated, in a letter dated November 10, 1943:—

"*In my view the book is so stiff with mis-statements, half-truths, innuendos, and logical fallacies that any attempt to furnish you with a full case against it demands what is tantamount to another book, over-burdened with authoritative references.*"

"In other words," explained Mr. Wells, "de la Bedoyere was not prepared to let me know in advance what he objected to. Consequently I was unable to meet him, though he now says that he is writing a book in reply to mine. When that appears maybe we shall lunch together, as suggested. But I doubt it will happen, because I am convinced that whatever would take place would be falsified afterwards by Mr. de la Bedoyere in his paper."

"You think this is typical?" I asked.

"It represents the mental quality of this dying, corrupting octopus of the Roman Catholic Church," he said. "It has fought, and will continue to fight, the emancipation of mankind with its last gasp. In Southern Ireland, throughout Central Europe, in Italy, in murdered Spain, in dictator-ridden Portugal, and wherever it can wriggle its tentacles, it fights against all that we are fighting for. The nearer it draws to death, the graver is the problem in human sanitation we shall one day have to face."

"And how," I asked as my final question, "can the Rationalist Movement do its part to destroy these reactionary forces and pave the way towards post-war reconstruction?"

Again he was in deadly earnest as he replied, and I trust that all Rationalists will pay due attention.

"Speak, publish, challenge every falsity. Avoid true and social intercourse with Roman Catholics, since they have invented and developed a complex boycott of liberal thought, and will do the same with you. Condemn every mixed marriage which introduces the priest into the menage as the supervisor of the children's education. Resist the diversion of public funds to the upkeep of Roman Catholic schools, withdraw patronage from Roman Catholic booksellers, organize public protests at the inordinate preference shown by the B.B.C. for Jesuit discourses, and so on. Fight intolerance with intolerance. We have tolerated the Roman Catholic Church in England for more than a century, believing that it would play a game of candour. We know better now."

I know that some of my readers will not agree that any such policy would be wise or practical, just as many good democrats believe in complete toleration of those enemies of democracy, the Fascists and their friends. But as I emerged into the growing gloom of Regent's Park at dusk I was com-

pelled to concede that Mr. Wells's attitude to the post-war world had at any rate the merit of being logical. He has seen the Roman Catholic Church as the thoroughly evil, obscurantist body that it is, and has suggested a way in which we can meet and defeat it with its own weapons.

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